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THE
WORKS
Of the Right Reverend
THOMAS NEWTON, D. D.
Late LORD BISHOP of BRISTOL,
And DEAN of ST. PAUL's, LONDON:
WITH SOME
ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE,
AND
ANECDOTES of several of his FRIENDS.
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.
IN SIX VOLUMES.

Which, with the Three Volumes of DISSERTATIONS
ON THE PROPHECIES, contain all his Lordship's
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N^o 62, IN ST. PAUL'S CHURCH-YARD.

MDCCLXXXVII,

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DISSERTATION XXI.

An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 40. 50.

IN the preceding verses our blessed Saviour cautions his disciples to avoid all occasions of offense either to themselves or others. Whatever it was that caused them to offend, their most darling passions, their most beloved interests, their most natural habits, they must part with them, even though they were as dear as a hand or foot or eye, and the loss altogether as painful. It was better for them to enter into life, "maimed" or "halt" or "blind" rather than having "two hands" or "two feet," or "two eyes" to be "cast into hell-fire, where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good, but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another." "For every one," saith He, "shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted

VOL. V. B. "salted

2 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

“salted with salt.” Some (1) learned men have been for emending the text; but there doth not seem to be any necessity for that. They have not the authority of any MS. or printed copy for departing from the common reading; and the common reading is really better than the best of their conjectures. It is true there is some difficulty in it, but the difficulty perhaps is not so great as commentators would make it, who instead of clearing and explaining have puzzled and perplexed the meaning, as they often do. It would be of little use, and less entertainment to recite the different senses which they have put upon this passage. I will only lay before you that, which appears to me the easiest and best, and most agreeable to the text and the context.

“For every one shall be salted with fire;” not *every one* indefinitely, but every one, who doth *offend* in the manner that he had been speaking of before, *shall be salted with fire*, shall not be destroyed with fire, but shall be *salted with fire*; shall be preserved with fire like as with salt from corruption, it being the property of salt to preserve from corruption. “And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt,” according to the divine command in the Levitical law, (Levit. II. 13.) “Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt.” It is observed that *sal* and is sometimes used for *as* by way of similitude. As every

(1) Scaliger and others.



every sacrifice or oblation of meat-offering under the law was to be *salted with salt* to preserve it from corruption; so every one who doth offend shall be *salted with fire*; the fire shall be of such a nature that it shall *salt* him as it were, and preserve him from corruption.

As this is the most easy construction of the text, so likewise is it the most agreeable to the context. The causal particle *for* evidently sheweth that our Saviour is assigning a reason of what he had said before. He had said before, that we must subdue and mortify our dearest inclinations if they caused us to offend; for it was better for us to subdue and mortify them, than by cherishing and indulging them “to be cast into hell-fire, where their worm “dieth not and the fire is not quenched.” But some of his hearers might perhaps think it strange, that *their worm should never die*, that *their fire should never be quenched*; and hardly believe it possible for them to subsist for ever in such a state of torment; and therefore he now assigns a reason how it cometh to pass that *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*; For every one shall be *salted with fire*; the fire shall be to them as *salt*; it shall not consume, but season them, and so make them capable of subsisting for ever in everlasting burnings. Here is a thing asserted, *their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*; and a reason rendered, *for every one shall be seasoned or salted with fire*. Whereas if we

4 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

understand the words, as some very (2) learned men have understood them, *for every one shall be destroyed with fire*, the same word in Hebrew signifying both to *salt* and to *destroy*; this will be not only a strange equivocal use of language, making the word *salt* to signify one thing in one part of the verse and another in another, but it will be likewise assigning a reason for what it is no reason but rather the contrary. Only take the words in their common acceptation, and the sense is good and the connexion clear; "Their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," their torments shall be everlasting in the flames; "For every one shall be salted with fire," every one (3) shall be salted with that very fire which torments him; that fire shall have a salt therein, which will make their body incorruptible. "And every sacrifice shall be salted with salt;" that is, the wicked shall in that torment of fire be made a sacrifice of everlasting holocaust to the divine justice, whereof God has given a proof and illustration in the typical law, having therein commanded that all sacrifices should be salted, which were offered by fire. And after all let not the expression of *salting with fire* seem strange, for it is no stranger than that of *baptizing with fire*, which is used in another part of the gospel (Matt. III. 11.) This I humbly conceive to be the true and genuine sense of the former part of the text, "For every

(2) Le Clerc. Dr. Clarke.

An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50. 5

“ every one shall be salted with fire, and every
“ sacrifice shall be salted with salt.”

Upon the mention of salt the evangelist immediately subjoins another saying of our Saviour's though delivered by our Saviour probably upon another occasion. There is no necessary consequence in the discourse. The word *salt* seemeth to be the only thing that formeth the connection. “ Salt is good ;” *Salt* is a metaphor in all languages ancient and modern for sense and wisdom ; or for men of sense and wisdom. Thus Athens being formerly the seat of learning, *Attic salt* is a common expression in the Classic Authors, and Athens itself is called *sal gentium* the *salt of the nations*. Thus our Saviour calleth his disciples (Matt. V. 13.) “ the salt of the earth ;” and St. Paul giveth this direction to Christians, (Col. IV. 6.) “ Let your speech be always
“ with grace seasoned with salt.” And there is great propriety in the metaphor ; for wisdom is a very necessary seasoning in life ; there is nothing so insipid as a fool. “ Salt is
“ good ;” wisdom or more particularly Christian knowlege is good and valuable ; or if you will understand it of persons rather than of things, wise and knowing men are valuable. “ But if the salt have lost its saltness where-
“ with will ye season it ?” but if wisdom degenerate into folly, and (Matt. VI. 23.) “ the
“ light that is in” men “ be darkness, how
B 3 “ great

(3) See Daubuz on the Revelation, p. 657.

6 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX: 49, 50.*

“ great is that darkness !” or otherwise if wise men forfeit their wisdom, and they who should be teachers and instructors of others apostatize from the truth themselves, what motives will you find strong enough to reclaim them, and bring them back again into the paths of holiness ? It hath been questioned, whether it be possible for salt to lose its saltness ; but however that may be, our Saviour might very well speak of it, as indeed he doth speak of it, only as a supposition. But the fact is indubitable, as it may be shown from several instances, and particularly from (4) Mr. Maundrell speaking of the Valley of Salt near Aleppo—“ You may see how the veins of it lie. “ I broke a piece of it of which that part “ that was exposed to the rain, sun and air, “ though it had the sparks and particles of “ salt, yet it had perfectly lost its savor as in “ St. Matthew Chapter V. The inner part “ which was connected to the rock, retained “ its savor, as I found by proof.” And (5) a learned commentator justly remarks, that “ when Le Clerc and others object against “ this comparison, or similitude, that salt “ cannot lose its savor, they consider not, “ that in the boiling up of the saline particles “ of which salt is made, there is left a *caput* “ *mortuum* which is insipid.” And who can say, that there are not some *capita mortua* too in the most learned societies and professions ?
Well.

(4) Maundrell, page the last.

Well therefore might our Saviour add as he doth in the following words, "Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another;" "be wise as serpents," but be "harmless as doves;" in "understanding" be "men," but in "malice" be "children;" remember edification, but remember charity.

Having thus largely paraphrased and explained the text, and shown its coherence and agreement with the context, I proceed to make now some observations and deductions from it, which observations and deductions will yet serve farther to illustrate and explain it.

I. "For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt." It seemeth probable from this passage as well as from other places of scripture, that the fire of hell is not *metaphorical* but *real*. That wicked men, they who have lived and died hardened and impenitent, shall finally be punished in a future state according to their demerits in this life, is a principle of reason as well as of revelation: But of what nature, of what kind this punishment will be we cannot learn from reason; all that we can know of it must be derived from revelation. The Heathens in their conceptions of hell imagined such tortures as the rolling stone and racking wheel, the gnawing vulture and lashing furies: but the assertions of scripture are built upon surer foundations than imagination and fancy; and

8 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

as often as the scriptures speak of the punishment of the damned, they speak of it under the notion of *fire*?

It is certain that God may make his creatures happy or miserable in ten thousand different manners more than we can imagin, "such as eye hath not seen, or ear heard, nor can it enter into the heart of man to conceive:" And it is possible that as the happiness of the blessed is represented by the metaphors of a *feast*, a *crown*, a *kingdom* and the like; so *fire* may be no more than a metaphor to express the misery of the damned; and especially since the former part of the sentence *their worm dieth not* is confessedly metaphorical, the latter part *and the fire is not quenched* may be so too. It is possible that the scripture in this as well as in other forms of expression may condescend to the capacities of men, choosing to represent spiritual things by something sensible, the torments of the next world by the most painful thing that we know of in this. I say it is possible that it may be so, but more probable that it is otherwise, the word *fire* being used so very often, and sometimes used in such a manner as if it was something more than a metaphor.

You know that men will rise again with their bodies; they therefore who shall be tormented will be tormented in body as well as in soul; and if they will suffer any bodily torture, why not that of *fire* as well as any other?

It

An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50. 9

It is called by this name throughout the New Testament from the beginning to the end; "hell-fire, unquenchable fire, everlasting fire" in the gospels; and the "lake of fire" and the "lake that burneth with fire and brimstone" in the Revelation; and not once only but many times; and a bare metaphor, it is likely, would not be repeated so very often. We must not understand every thing in parables too rigorously and according to the letter; yet it is observable that in the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus the punishment of the uncharitable Rich man is made to consist (Luke XVI. 24.) in his being "tormented in the flame." But our Saviour specifies this punishment not only in parables where he may be supposed to speak more figuratively, but likewise in his explanation of parables where he must be supposed to speak more plainly. Thus in his explanation of the parable of the tares, (Matt. XIII. 40, &c.) "As therefore
" the tares are gathered and burnt in the fire,
" so shall it be in the end of this world; The
" Son of man shall send forth his angels, and
" they shall gather out of his kingdom all
" things that offend and them which do iniquity;
" And shall cast them into a furnace
" of fire, there shall be wailing and gnashing
" of teeth:" And thus again (Ib. 47, &c.) in his explanation of the parable of the "net
" that was cast into the sea and gathered of
" every kind; which when it was full they
" drew

10 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

“drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered
 “the good into vessels, but cast the bad away :
 “So shall it be,” saith our Saviour, “at the
 “end of the world ; the angels shall come
 “forth, and sever the wicked from among
 “the just, and shall cast them into the furnace
 “of fire ; there shall be wailing and gnashing
 “of teeth.” Nay farther, our blessed Saviour
 in his description of the day of judgment,
 when he passeth sentence upon the wicked,
 saith (Matt. XXV. 41.) “Depart from me,
 “ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for
 “the devil and his angels.” A judge in pro-
 nouncing the last solemn sentence must be sup-
 posed to speak plainly without a figure : and
 indeed in no case we should depart from the
 letter of scripture, but where necessity re-
 quires it.

These assertions are clear and strong ; but
 in the passage of St. Mark, that we have been
 explaining, our Saviour not only asserts but
 proves, not only affirms the thing, but assigns
 a reason. They who shall offend, saith He,
 “shall be cast into the fire that never shall be
 “quenched ;” and as if this was not enough
 he repeats and adds, “Where their worm
 “dieth not and the fire is not quenched ;”
 and this not once only, but *three* times toge-
 ther. (ver. 44, 46, 48.) Nay he proceeds
 farther ; and having asserted that their tor-
 ments will be perpetual in the flames, he assigns
 a reason to account how they will be perpe-
 tual,

tual, "For every one shall be salted with fire;" that is, as we have explained it, the fire shall be of such a nature that it shall *salt* them as it were; it shall not consume, but *season* them, and so make them capable of subsisting for ever in everlasting burnings. You see that our Saviour not only affirms that fire shall be the portion of the wicked, but condescends even to argue upon it; and He who shall be the judge of mankind certainly knoweth best what will be their final doom and portion. Commentators generally conceive that *their worm dieth not* is spoken in reference to their souls, and that *the fire is not quenched* relates to their bodies. Having offended both in body and soul, they shall be punished in the one as well as in the other: and as the worm of guilt, the sense and consciousness of their evil doings, will torment their souls, so the fire will for ever excruciate their bodies. The only difficulty is to conceive how it will be possible for them to subsist for ever in the fire; but this difficulty is here removed, and the thing is plainly accounted for; "for every one shall be salted with the fire," and so seasoned as to be for ever dying and yet never die. And certainly the same divine power, that made the bush to burn with fire and yet the bush was not consumed, and that preserved the three young men in the fiery furnace, can as easily make a consumeable body inconsumeable, and capable of subsisting for ever in everlasting fire.

We

12 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

" We cannot indeed define where will be the place of this fire, but that is no argument at all against its reality. Some imagin that the fire at the center of the earth will be the place of hell; but if there be such a central fire, yet that this central fire should be the place of hell seemeth not agreeable to that passage in St. Peter, (2 Pet. III. 13.) where he saith, that after the general conflagration and the dissolution of the present heavens and earth, there will be " new heavens and a new earth " wherein dwelleth righteousness." This earth therefore cannot be the place of the damned, nor the central fire the fire of hell. Others more probably suppose, that a comet or the sun will be the place of hell. There the fire is already kindled. But the Lord of the universe can easily kindle any star or planet; that it shall immediately become a furnace of fire for the punishment of rebellious creatures against their creator. Think on this, think what a dreadful thing it is to fall into the hands of an incensed God; and then think (2 Pet. III. 11.) " what manner of persons " we ought to be in all holy conversation and " godliness." The very thought of eternal fire is terrible; (Isa. XXXIII. 14.) " Who " among us can dwell with the devouring " fire? who among us can dwell with ever- " lasting burnings?" Let us therefore live so that we may escape them. (Heb. XII. 28, 29.) " Let us serve God with reverence and " godly

An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50. 13

"godly fear, for our God is a consuming
"fire."

2. "Salt is good; but if the salt have lost
"its saltiness, wherewith will ye season it?"
From hence we may learn this melancholy
truth, that how valuable soever wisdom and
religion are in themselves, yet whenever wise
and religious men abandon their principles,
and act against all that they have formerly pro-
fessed, their case is in a manner desperate, and
it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to
reclaim them. (Prov. XXII. 6.) "Train up
"a child in the way he should go, and he
"will not depart from it when he is old;"
but if they depart from it, they seldom keep
within any bounds, their "sin is exceeding
"sinful," they render their good education a
curse instead of a blessing, and are only so
much worse, as they know so much more than
other people. The truth is, the faults of
such persons are not so properly faults of their
understanding as of their will; and these are
always harder to be corrected than those. For
who shall pretend to advise them? what can
you offer to their consideration more than they
know already? They have too good an opinion
of themselves, and too contemptuous a notion
of others, ever to listen to reproof, unless it
be to laugh at it; and as the proverb says,
(Prov. XXVI. 12.) "Seest thou a man wise
"in his own conceit? there is more hope of
"a fool than of him."

It

14 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

It is a lamentable thing but it is a true thing, that the clearest head and the foulest heart do sometimes go together. There is really a great deal of ingenuity required to be completely wicked. Men of superior understanding and knowledge, as they have it in their power to do more good, so they are likewise capable of doing more hurt, than others of inferior abilities: and whenever they take a turn to be bad, they are very bad indeed. As Solomon was the greatest instance of human wisdom, so was he likewise of falling off from it; and then how greatly was he changed from his former self! He was only so much the more inglorious for having been before so renowned and glorious. When he forsook his God, his wisdom forsook him; nor could even foolish Rehoboam make a more despicable figure than the wise king Solomon. The corruption of the best is always the worst. When an apostle apostatizes, he turns a Judas. When an angel falls, he becomes a devil. Religion is the best thing in the world; but yet it may be questioned, whether religion hath done more good in the world, than false notions in religion have done harm; when immorality is sanctified, when men are both wicked and cruel out of a principle of conscience, and can persecute, murder and massacre to do God good service. (Luke XI. 35.) "Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness." "Salt is good," but let us remember,

member, (Matt. V. 13.) that "if the salt
"have lost its savor, it is thenceforth good
"for nothing, but to be cast out and to be
"trodden under foot of men."

3. "Have salt in yourselves." This sup-
poses that it is in every man's power to attain
to a sufficient degree of wisdom; for our Sa-
viour would not exact or command any thing
that is impossible. There is a difference in
men's souls, without doubt, in their first for-
mation; so that some have naturally spirits as
quick and active as fire, and others almost as
sluggish and heavy as lead. This difference is
increased by the bodies in which they are
placed, and the organs with which they are
accommodated, for even the manner of set-
ting the diamond contributes or not to its
lustre. But this original and constitutional
difference in men's understandings is not so
great as perhaps we may imagin. Men natu-
rally are more upon an equality than is com-
monly conceived. The difference between
them ariseth not so much from what they can-
not help, as from what they can; not so much
from nature, as from education, company, dif-
ferent ways of life, different methods of ap-
plication and the like. It is certain, that the
forming of our minds depends very much upon
ourselves: And yet how many pass their time
as careless and thoughtless, as if they were
sent into the world to gape and do nothing;
while others are so wedded to certain forms
and

16 *An Explanation of St. MARK IX. 49, 50.*

and tenets, so obstinately fixed, and so incorrigibly dull, that (Prov. XXVII. 22.) even “though you should bray them in a mortar among wheat with a pestil, yet will not their foolishness depart from them.”

As this is the case of knowlege in general, so likewise is it of Christian knowlege in particular. We live, God be thanked, in a protestant country where we may freely read the bible: but yet I wish that many do not go out of the world without so much as ever once reading it as they ought, or knowing any thing more of it than they hear in Churches; and it is well if they hear it there. I do not speak only of the lowest of the people whose labor and penury are in some measure their excuse; but even of those of higher rank and condition; whose easy fortunes free them from the drudgery of the body so that they may better attend to the improvement of their minds. Sins of ignorance are not such slight things and so venial as we may imagin; especially when our ignorance is owing to ourselves, to our own negligence and supineness. And ignorance in this case is the more aggravated, the more inexcusable, because every thing that is necessary to be known is so plain and easy to be known, that he who runs may read it. (Eph. V. 17.) “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is.” In the Jewish Law (Exod. XIII. 12, 13.) God orders the first-born, the male of every

every creature to be offered to him, but particularly excepts the firstling of an ass; the Holy Spirit this intimating, that he hath not any pleasure (Eccles. V. 11.) “in the sacrifice of fools.”

4. and lastly. “Have salt in yourselves and have peace one with another.” This appears to carry an insinuation, as if learning and knowledge were apt to beget a spirit of pride and contention; and indeed among men of parts and learning, there is not that easy resignation, that dull uniformity of assent, which prevails in countries, where the people are purposely kept in ignorance, and follow their leaders as tamely and quietly as a flock of sheep their bell-weather. In a greater range of thought there will necessarily be a greater diversity of opinions; but we should remember that the true use of knowledge is not to raise disputes but to compose them, to restrain all pride and bitterness, to correct our spirits, to meliorate our tempers, to (6) soften our manners, nor ever suffer us to be fierce and savage; and if it hath not this effect, it only renders a man so much more dangerous and more intolerable. Knowledge is an excellent thing, but charity is more excellent. In reality there is more true merit in a generous, good-natured, benevolent, beneficent spirit, obliging to all, offensive to none, than in all

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(6) ——— Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec finit esse feros

Ovid.

the ill-natured wit and satir in the world. It is more of the temper of heaven, and hath something in it more engaging, more charming even upon earth. "Covet earnestly the best gifts," saith the apostle, (1 Cor. XII. 31.) "and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way;" and *and this more excellent way is charity*, of which he draweth a most amiable picture, and preferreth that divine quality to *the speaking with the tongues of men and of angels*, and to *the understanding of all mysteries and of all knowlege*. (XIII. 1, 2.) "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal; And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowlege, and have no charity, I am nothing."

Happy they who possess both qualities! Our Saviour unites them in precept, and it is a pity that they should ever be separated in practice. Good-nature tempers and corrects the sharpness and severity of wisdom; and wisdom quickens and inlivens the softness and easiness of good-nature. Wisdom without good-nature is apt to be mischievous; and good-nature without wisdom is liable to grow contemptible. Let it be therefore our constant care and endeavor to unite as much as we can these accomplishments; good sense with good manners; strength of mind with sweetness of temper; an able head with a tender heart;

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heart; or to speak in scripture-phrafe, the *wisdom of the serpent with the harmlesness of the dove*; the *understanding of men with the malice of children*; *salt in ourselves with peace towards all others*. And may that God who is the giver of all good gifts, and who is of infinite goodness, as well as of infinite wisdom, give us such a measure and proportion of each, such wisdom that we may be (2 Tim. III. 15.) “wise unto salvation,” and such goodness, that we may be (Luke VI. 36.) “merciful as he is merciful.”

DISSERTATION XXII.

On the Character of the PRODIGAL:

IT is surprising to consider the force and influence of fashion in the world; and how men are (1) like sheep which singly are led or driven with difficulty, but go on easily in a flock together; and if a few lead the way, all the rest will readily follow. It is certain that example is of infinitely greater weight and authority with mankind than reason; and ages
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(1) Plutarch in the life of Cato the elder.

and nations are as much distinguished by their particular manners and fashions as single persons. If any even the most incurious observer of things was asked what was the distinguishing characteristic of this age and of this nation; he must answer that a spirit of extravagance and profusion had possessed all sorts of people, and reigned almost universally from the highest to the lowest. There have been times remarkable for their modesty and sobriety, for their parsimony and integrity among ourselves as well as among the Spartans, and in the infancy of the Roman commonwealth: but the virtues of our forefathers have died with them, the ancient frugality and simplicity of manners are now no more, the flood-gates of luxury and prodigality are opened, and men of all ranks and degrees live more like what they would be than what they really are. The countryman forgets his native plainness, and affects the modes and fashions of the citizen; the citizen emulates the dress and figure and equipage of the gentleman of superior fortune; and gentlemen delight to appear in all the pomp and parade and splendor of noblemen; and noblemen are vying in taste and grandeur to outdo one another and to undo themselves.

This is the case more or less of some of all ranks and degrees; and if any one should be so prudent as to manage with the least frugality and make proper provision for a family,
 he

he shall hardly escape the imputation of covetousness, and in all probability will be branded for a narrow-soul'd wretch of no spirit, of no significance. And do not such instances of prodigality and profusion in men of all ranks and conditions, the least as well as the greatest, loudly plead the necessity not only of enacting sumptuary laws but of putting them strictly in execution too? But till the voice of authority shall exert itself, let the voice of reason be heard and what our Saviour says (Luke XV.) in the parable of the prodigal son. We think that we cannot more effectually expose the mischief and folly of prodigality than by taking a survey of the character of the prodigal, as it is drawn in that parable. For we shall see there 1st the principal motives and inducements to this vice, 2dly its usual concomitants and attendants, 3dly its dreadful effects and consequences, 4thly the final issue and conclusion of all, repentance. At the same time we cannot but observe what a finished character our Saviour hath drawn in few words, and how well he must have understood the world and mankind, (John II. 25.) "and needed
"not that any should testify of man for he
"knew what was in man."

I. Let us consider what are the principal *motives* and *inducements* to prodigality and extravagance. What led the prodigal in the parable first into this course seemeth to have
C 3 been

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been his youth and inexperience. "A certain man had two sons;" (ver. 11.) and he was the *younger* who was the prodigal; the *elder* was more sober and regular, and could say to his father, (ver. 29.) "Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment." And generally young men like young plants are aptest to grow wild and luxuriant. Their warm constitution and hot blood prompt them to many things, which their cooler reason and maturer judgment would condemn. Their inexperience in the ways of the world betrays them the more easily into its snares. The more they know of its vanities, the more they will learn to despise them. As men advance in years, we may observe that they commonly grow more frugal; or if they continue expensive afterwards, yet the habit was first contracted when they were young and heedless. The royal preacher therefore with great propriety addresseth his discourse to the young man in particular, (Eccles. XI. 9.) "Rejoice O young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment."

But it was not his youth and inexperience alone that led the prodigal in the parable into this course of life, for God forbid that every young

young gentleman of fortune should be idle and extravagant; but he seemeth moreover to have been actuated by great vanity; he was for withdrawing himself from under his father's eye and observation; he fancied that he could manage as well without his superintendency and direction; he was for becoming independent and setting up for himself; "Father," says he, (ver. 12.) "give me the portion of goods that falleth to me." And indeed there is no rock upon which youth more frequently and more fatally make shipwrack, than this vain desire and affectation of being men too soon, men in extravagance, men in licentiousness, for there is no danger of their being too soon men in understanding. But vanity is not peculiar to youth, and vanity in one shape or other is the general motive to prodigality; and so many expend so much more than they can afford for no other reason, but that they may be thought richer or greater or some way or other more considerable than they are in reality. How many purchase books without ever reading them, and pictures without ever understanding them, only for the name of having a fine collection? How many in their houses, their furniture, their tables, their equipage, exceed their proportion, and hurt their fortunes, not for the sake of any real pleasure that they enjoy above others, but merely for the reputation of that fantastic thing which they call a *taste*? In most things men consult

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appearance and ostentation more than use and convenience; and their happiness consists not so much in their own enjoyment as in the opinion of others.

But the prodigal in the parable had other means of consuming his substance besides his vanity, for he was also fond of foreign countries and foreign fashions. "He gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country," (ver. 13.) which led him into so much expense. And the money that some of our young travelers draw out of the nation, and the little good that they bring into it again, are perhaps hardly conceivable but by persons who have had opportunities of seeing and knowing it. It is to be wished, that the (2) project of a famous politician was put in practice, and there were censors appointed to whom our youth should be obliged to give an exact account of their travels in writing upon their return to their native country. As things are at present, our countrymen are noted for little more than their irregularity and extravagance in foreign parts; and we do not often find that they leave their follies and their vices behind them, but oftener bring them home with improvement and addition. We are all of us indeed too fond of novelty, and encourage foreign fashions and foreign manufactures to the discouragement of our own. There is one nation particularly whereof we are most humble imitators, with-

(2) Harrington.

out

out considering how much it costs us and how little it becomes us. But if we would imitate them in any thing, it would be well if we would imitate them in the wisest part of their character, in their oeconomy and frugality, their great affection for their own country, and their little esteem of all others in comparison, their exporting as many as they can of their own commodities for the use of other nations, and importing as few as they can of the products of other nations for their own consumption.

II. We have seen what are the principal motives and inducements to extravagance, and let us now in the next place consider what are its usual *concomitants* and *attendants*, and observe how the prodigal behaved in the highth of his prodigality. It is said (ver. 13.) that “ he “ wasted his substance with riotous living,” and afterwards (ver. 30.) “ that he devoured “ his living with harlots.” And it seemeth almost as impossible to spend, as it is in the ordinary course of affairs to get, a great estate in a short time with innocence. Some vice or other always attends extravagance; as perhaps the money is expended in pride, or thrown away at play, or consumed in eating or drinking, though drinking doth not seem to be the reigning vice of this age; it hath descended much from high to low life, and the fashionable excess in these days is rather luxury in eating. But the plainest diet is the most wholesome

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some as well as the most agreeable to nature, and they must be brutish indeed who (3) live that they may eat and drink; men should only eat and drink that they may live. Or perhaps they are expensive in their pleasures, and like the prodigal in the parable devour their living with harlots, than which no vice more certainly ruins the estate, destroys the body, and damns the soul; for (whatever our fine gentlemen may think) "whoremongers and adulterers" "God will judge," says the apostle; (Heb. XIII. 4.) and in another place, (Eph. V. 5.) "No whoremonger nor unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God." Or perhaps all these vices go hand in hand together, as it is not unusual for the fop, the gamester, the epicure, the drunkard and the whoremonger to be all united in one and the same character.

At the same time extravagance hinders a man from discharging his duty in other respects; and he is guilty of sins of omission as well as of commission. His expenses are such continual drains and draw so much from him, that the spring of charity is dried up: He can spare nothing from his own superfluities to relieve the necessities of others. He liveth as if he was born for himself alone, hath so little feeling for others that he doth not so much as provide for those of his own household, and in this respect (1 Tim. V. 8.) "is worse than an infidel."

(3) Socrates in Plutarch's treatise of hearing the poets.

Extravagance not only hinders a man from doing good, but often puts him upon doing ill, upon mean and unworthy actions, oppressing his neighbours, racking his tenants, running in debt and never paying or paying with difficulty, injuring his family, robbing his children, betraying his trusts, and trying any expedient to supply his present exigencies and occasions. In short an extravagant man can never make a good husband, or a good father, or a good son; and to complete his character, he is as deficient in his duty to God as to men, and you shall seldom observe in any one a spirit of extravagance and profusion, but it is attended with a spirit of profaneness and irreligion.

III. If such are the concomitants and attendants of this vice it is easy to guess how dreadful must be the *effects and consequences*. Let us observe how it fared with the prodigal in the parable. "When he had spent all, (ver. 14.) "there arose a mighty famine in that land." Providence is often pleased to interpose, and some signal calamity overtakes the profuse and profligate, and accelerates their ruin. God can never prosper extravagance, the wasting and consuming of his talents. Nothing is more odious in his sight than such instances of misapplied wealth, a thing that is capable of doing so much good perverted to so much harm: And indeed it is but just and fitting that they, who thus abuse God's mercies, should smart under his judgments.

But

But if no extraordinary judgment should befall them, yet the natural and ordinary effects of their extravagance is punishment sufficient, and no effect is more natural and ordinary than its reducing them to want and necessity. When the prodigal in the parable “had spent all, he began to be in want.” He would deny himself nothing as long as his money lasted; but when that was gone, then he began to know what it was to want. There is no need of the spirit of prophecy to foresee, that a continued course of extravagance must either a little sooner or a little later conclude in beggary and ruin. How dreadful then must be the change of the scene? how little able are they, who have lived in ease and affluence, to struggle with difficulties and indigence? and to what wretched shifts, to what a miserable condition are they frequently reduced, some to starve, some to beg, some to fly their native country, some to languish in prison, and some by violent means to put an end to themselves to put an end to their misery? The prodigal in the parable was in all appearance a single man, so that himself only suffered for his own misconduct: but many involve their families in difficulties and troubles on their account, keep them needy while they live, and leave them entirely destitute when they die, unless perhaps the wisdom of their ancestors hath tied up their hands, and made some settlement, some provision for posterity.

As extravagance occasions want, so want occasions servility and dependence. We see the prodigal in the parable, when he had spent all and was now grown necessitous, (ver. 15.) “went and joined himself to a citizen of that country,” and submitted to be as a servant when he might have commanded as a master. But vanity and profusion will bring down even the greatest to make the meanest submissions. Let your fortune be what it will, if you live above yourself, you must come in time to live below yourself. There is no preserving your integrity, and living free and independent, without living within your income. The man who can thus proportion and moderate his expenses is superior to all temptations, and wanting nothing nothing can corrupt him: but whoever liveth above his fortune, and maketh himself necessitous, maketh himself dependent, and can no longer assert his freedom, but must sell his birthright and perhaps sell himself. And when a man is once become corrupt and venal, he is fit for any dirty work, as the prodigal in the parable was “sent into the fields to feed swine.” When a Roman Consul could make a supper of turnips roasted with his own hands, it was in vain for the enemy to attempt to bribe him from his duty; his poverty was magnificence, and his frugality was riches: but had he lived in all the politeness and luxury of succeeding ages, he would hardly have exerted that stubborn uncomplying virtue; had the expenses of his

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his table and equipage rendered him necessitous, his necessity would in all probability have rendered him corrupt; and he would have preferred gold to duty, private interest to public spirit, and the patriot with oeconomy and frugality would have been with prodigality and profuseness the betrayer and seller of his country.

But we may observe that this course of life is rarely known to prosper. A man is scarce ever the richer for the wages of iniquity. The curse of God is in the house of corruption. The money that is ill gotten is commonly as ill spent; and the man is always necessitous, and no sooner is extricated out of one difficulty but presently he is involved in another. We do not find that the prodigal in the parable at all mended his condition by his mean servitude, he was in want before, and he was in want still; for (ver. 16.) “ he would fain have
“ filled his belly with the husks that the swine
“ did eat, and no man gave unto him.” It was a farther aggravation to his misfortunes that *no man gave unto him*; but such is the usual fate of the prodigal, that his friends and his fortune forsake him both together, and how much soever he hath squandered away upon others in his prosperity, yet few or none are inclined to compassionate and relieve him in his adversity. Even they, who make their advantage of his profusion, secretly despise him for it, and upon any reduction of his affairs
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are perhaps the first to distress him. The world is not over apt to commiserate those who come to misfortunes which they could neither foresee nor prevent; and surely he merits much less of our pity and regard, who ruins himself knowingly, and is undone merely by his own fault. The generality of mankind, instead of pitying him, will rather remember his former insolent behaviour, and think he is well requited. His very relations soon grow weary of relieving and assisting a man, who will run through every thing; and there is no remedy but he must live in necessity and contempt, the scorn of his enemies and the shame of his friends.

IV. It is no wonder, when such are the effects and consequences of this vice, that the final issue and conclusion of all is *repentance*. There is no merit in it, for a man cannot help being sorry when he hath plunged himself into straits and difficulties; and the remembrance of his former gayety and splendor is so far from being any comfort to him, that it greatly aggravates his present misfortunes. But the worst of it is, this repentance is seldom perfect repentance and reformation. It is "the sorrow of the world," (2 Cor. VII. 10.) and not "a godly sorrow that worketh" "repentance not to be repented of." For deliver some persons out of their distress, and they will immediately return to their old courses; pay their debts, and they will run

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in debt again. Some again know no way of forsaking their extravagance, but by passing into the other extreme of covetousness; and nothing is more common than to see the young spendthrift grow up into an old miser. Others, who would really take up and reform, perceive at last their affairs gone too far to be ever retrieved; and like Esau, after he had parted with his birthright, (Heb. XII. 17.) “find no place of repentance, though they seek it carefully with tears.”

Happy was it for the prodigal in the parable, that he reformed in time, and had a kind father yet living to receive him. “When he came to himself,” say the parable, (ver. 17.) as if he had been out of his senses before, and his former course of life had been a species of madness. “When he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!” The first step of his amendment you see was consideration, and consideration produceth virtuous resolutions, (ver. 18, 19.) “I will arise and go to my father and will say unto him Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.” Virtuous resolutions produce virtuous actions; (ver. 20.) “And he arose and came to his father.” The behaviour of his father is designed to represent unto us the affection of our Father who is in heaven. For
“when

“ when he was yet a great way off, his father
“ saw him, and had compassion, and ran and
“ fell on his neck and kissed him.” How
exquisite, how tender is this ! but the recovery of his son from a course of extravagance and vice, was like receiving him from the dead ; (ver. 24.) “ For this my son was dead
“ and is alive again ; he was lost and is
“ found.”

We may properly make two or three inferences from the foregoing discourse, and those we shall endeavor to dispatch in as few words as possible.

1. You see what an admirable character our Saviour hath drawn of the prodigal in all stages and degrees from his first motives and inducements to his final repentance and reformation. So short and at the same time so complete a character you cannot find exemplified in any other author. Short as it is, it comprehends almost every thing that can be said or thought upon the subject. Learn from hence a due reverence and esteem of the scriptures. Peruse them often. Often meditate upon them. And the more you read and understand, the more you will admire and value them.

2. You see the folly, the wickedness, the mischief of a life of prodigality and extravagance ; how absurd the motives and inducements, how sinful the concomitants and attendants, how ruinous the effects and consequences. Learn from hence to practise the

34 *On the Character of the PRODIGAL.*

great and necessary virtue of oeconomy and frugality. Be modest. Be sober. Be diligent. Be temperate. Refrain your appetites. Regulate your expenses. Live within your fortune. Scorn to run in debt. And as the apostle says, (Rom. XIII. 8.) "Owe no man any thing but to love one another."

3dly. Let us, before we conclude, consider a little more particularly, and compare the character of these times, the character of this nation, with that of the prodigal. We observed in the opening of this discourse, that the distinguishing and reigning vice of this age was extravagance and profusion; and as it betrayed the prodigal, so it hath led us into all manner of sin and wickedness. One of the least faults of this age, which would be esteemed a very great one in any other, is that immoderate love of pleasure, which is visible in all ranks and degrees among us, in the old as well as the young, in the women as much as the men. The whole business of their lives is pleasure; and never was so much time as well as money expended in public diversions, never was such a number and variety of public entertainments, and all of them full, all of them crowded. Formerly they partook of pleasures sometimes, at convenient seasons; but now they live in them, and cannot live without them. Formerly they diverted themselves a little after the business and fatigue of the day; but now they have diversions from
8 morning

morning till night, and all the night; and indeed when they begin in the morning, they must be fit for nothing else all the day. It would be well if they were all innocent pleasures and diversions, though they cannot be innocent which consume so much time, which expend so much money: but our people are now grown as fond of gaming as of pleasure, or rather gaming is their greatest pleasure. There is scarce any such thing, as meeting to spend any time in ingenious or entertaining or improving conversation: but all companies engage more or less in play; children themselves are trained up to it, and they never depart from it when they are old: and though the strictest laws are enacted against gaming, yet some of the legislators themselves are the first to break the laws, and set a most pernicious example to others. And what wonder then that in every other instance there is that corruption of morals, that relaxation of discipline, that neglect of all order and government, that contempt of all virtue and religion, as if there was no king, or no God that ruled over men? We are truly "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;" for how thin are our churches, while play-houses and public gardens are crowded? How few observe the sabbath, or bear to dedicate even one day in seven to pious meditations? How many never observe it at all, and have their parties at play on that day as well as all the rest of the

week? How is all family devotion slighted and neglected as well as the public worship of God in the congregation? How have some of the most solemn offices in the liturgy been ridiculed, the word of God itself been perverted and abused, and infidelity and blasphemy not only been vended in secret, but published with impunity, and received with applause and approbation. “And shall not God visit for these things? shall not his soul be avenged on such a nation as this?” There is but one way to prevent or avert his judgments, and that is by repentance. Let us resemble the prodigal in this, as much as we do in other particulars. Let us return and repent like him, and like him we shall be received and forgiven. “For as I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live.”

DISSERTATION XXIII.

Against LUXURY.

EXTRAVAGANCE and luxury are two of the great reigning vices of this age and of this nation: and as the mischievous effects of extravagance are fully set forth in the character

character of the Prodigal ; so the fatal end of its sister sin *luxury* cannot be more truly represented than in the case of the Rich man in the parable, (Luke XVI.) who from the highth of splendor and happiness was cast down to the depth of torment and misery. He was (ver. 19.) “ cloathed in purple and fine linen “ and fared sumptuously every day ;” but now by a sad reverse of things he was “ torment-
“ ed” in the “ flames,” and wanted even “ a
“ drop of water to cool his tongue.” Being in torments, he desired, as it was natural, a little respite and relief from them ; but even this he cannot obtain. And what had he done so hainous as to deserve this terrible punishment ? The only crime here alleged against him is his *luxury*. He is not charged with acquiring or increasing his estate by extortion and injustice ; he is not accused of doing any evil with his money, but only of living at ease and in affluence, and doing no good ; (ver. 25.) “ Son remember, that thou in thy life time
“ receivedst thy good things, and therefore
“ now thou art tormented.” And is not this enough to startle and alarm all those, who spend their wealth and their days in luxury and pleasure ; as if they were born only for themselves, and had none other business and concern in life but their own gratification and indulgence.

As some virtues, so some vices are more peculiar to one state and condition of life than

to another; but it is the excellence of the present age, to be able to reconcile inconsistencies, and to make the vices, which are proper to some, common to all. Luxury, one would imagin, was a vice incident only to a great and ample fortune; a sin of too high a price for any of inferior quality; a crime above the purchase and expence of the generality of mankind: but such is the aspiring genius of the present age, that the meanest are willing to emulate the greatest; the disease is become epidemical, hath infected some of all ranks and degrees, the court and the camp, the city and the country, and spread itself even to the horns of the altar. And where it may stop, or what may be the consequence, God only knoweth; but the natural tendency of things is enough to make the stoutest and most sanguin of us all to tremble, notwithstanding the fashionable plea that *private vices are public benefits*.

All who have any regard for themselves, or their families, or their country, should unite heartily against the common enemy. At least it cannot misbecome a minister of the gospel, who wisheth well to virtue and wisheth well to his country, to contribute all he can to stop the progress of this growing evil, which like a mighty torrent is pouring in upon us; and if not opposed in time, will overwhelm and deluge all. What luxury is, I presume, there is no necessity to define or explain. Every
one

one sufficiently understands, that it is living and enjoying the good things of life above our rank and proportion, which any man may be guilty of in the lowest sphere as well as in the highest, and most men are guilty of in some degree or other. Without aggravating matters, there is hardly any vice of more pernicious consequence in all respects; as will evidently appear, whether we consider it 1st with regard to a *man's self*, or 2dly with regard to *society*, or 3dly and lastly with regard to *God and religion*.

I. Let us consider the effects of luxury with regard to a *man's self*; and we shall find it equally pernicious to his mind, and body, and estate. A life of ease and luxury is certainly not the way to improve but impair the faculties of the mind. Wisdom is to be acquired only by temperance and disciplin; and men of pleasure will hardly submit to the pains which are necessary to learn it. They live in a continual dissipation and distraction of mind; and though sometimes their thoughts may be bright, yet they are, like the sun-beams glittering upon the water, bright and broken. Their parts may be ever so quick and ready naturally, but like all other things they will be worse for want of proper exercise. As the understanding groweth weaker, so the passions grow stronger by luxury and indulgence, like fruits and plants by a hot-bed in gardening. Such persons are used so to humor and indulge themselves, that they expect to be humored and in-

dulged as much by others. The stream and current of their affections is not to be stopped or opposed; and if at any time they are opposed, then like waters stopped in their passage, they rage and foam and lift up their waves. It is no unusual thing for a man by pride and luxury to be changed like Nebuchadnezzar into a beast.

Is not this argument enough against luxury, that at the same time that it weakens and depraves the understanding, it strengthens and inflames the passions? But it is as bad for the body as for the mind, and is no less an enemy to the health of the one than to the improvement of the other. It is attended with a whole train of diseases, to which temperance and abstinence are in great measure strangers; and in youth treasures up pains and aches for old age. Not that many who lead a luxurious dissolute life ever arrive at old age; they generally drop off the tree before their time, and are no sooner ripe than they are rotten. Such persons are commonly said, and not improperly said, to live *too fast*; and are old even while they are young. At best there is not that free circulation and easy digestion, there are not those chearful and lightsome spirits, there is not that sound and quiet sleep, that vigor and vivacity in youth, that mellowness and agreeableness in age, which are the natural and genuine effects of temperance and exercise. We see by daily experience, as well as read in sacred history, that

that in the lap of *Dalilah* even a *Sampson* will lose his strength. And it behoveth us to consider, whether the frequency of gout, stone, palsy, dropsey, and madness itself, which of late years is observed to have spread very much among us, be not originally owing to luxury and high living.

Would not any reasonable man therefore avoid luxury as he regards his health? But it is as bad for the estate as for the body, wastes and consumes the one as it weakens and enervates the other. It is of all vices the most chargeable. A little estate must soon sink under the weight of it, for even the greatest cannot bear the burden; as we see plainly by the many instances of ancient and noble families, which have been reduced by it to want and to nothing. The acquisitions of ages have been spent in a few years; and few can fall like Job from abundance to want, and yet like Job preserve their temper. Their minds are generally so softened, and their bodies so weakened and enervated by their former indolence and plenty, that of all people they are least able to struggle with difficulties. The expense of luxury is certain, and what are the gains? As it is infallibly the way to spend an estate, so it is never the way to get any. This must be the effect of "rising up early" and "late taking rest," and "eating the bread of carefulness;" but "the drunkard and the glutton," as Solomon expresseth it, (Prov. XXIII.

21.) "shall come to poverty, and drowfiness
 "shall cloath a man with rags." In any station, in any business, in any profession it is impossible for a man ever to grow illustrious, or achieve any thing great and noble, as long as he abandons himself to his ease and his pleasure. The greatest scholars, the greatest lawgivers, the greatest heroes, have been the most laborious, or they would not have been the most useful, in their generation. Hercules would never have been made immortal, if according to the fable he had preferred the flowery paths of pleasure, and had not chosen the steep and toilsome road of virtue. So far is this vice from aggrandizing the meanest, that it will even debase the greatest. The feasts and luxury of Persia could intoxicate an Alexander. The pleasures and softness of Campania could overcome an Hannibal. And Sampson, if he had never been a slave to his pleasures, would never have been a slave to his enemies. He was blinded by his passions, before his eyes were put out by the Philistines.

II. Such are the fatal effects of this vice with regard to a *man's self*; but the pernicious consequences of it will farther appear by considering it 2dly with regard to *society*; and we shall find it as great an enemy to societies as to single persons. It unqualifies men for every station and employment; disables them from performing the duties of public or private life; renders them equally unfit to govern or obey;
 living

living all for themselves and doing nothing for others, like drones in a hive draining the combs of their honey and never making any of their own. It closeth the heart and shutteth the hand to acts of benevolence and kindness, taketh away from men the inclination to do good as well as putteth it out of their power to do it. They are so easy and happy in themselves, that they have no commiseration, no notion almost of the wants and sufferings of others; and for this reason the prophet denounceth woe unto them; (Amos VI. 1, &c.)

“ Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and
“ are named chief of the nations; that put far
“ away the evil day, and cause the seat of
“ violence to come near; that lie upon beds
“ of ivory, and stretch themselves upon their
“ couches, and eat the lambs out of the flock
“ and the calves out of the midst of the stall;
“ that chant to the sound of the viol, and in-
“ vent to themselves instruments of music;
“ that drink wine in bowls, and anoint them-
“ selves with the chief ointments, but they
“ are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph.”

In the parable the rich man, “ who was cloath-
“ ed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day,” had yet no pity, no regard for poor Lazarus, who was “ laid at his
“ gate full of sores and desiring to be fed with
“ the crumbs which fell from his table.” The money that should be bestowed in charity luxury diverts to other purposes; consumes in dress
and

and equipage, expends on dogs and horses what should cloath the naked, feed the hungry, comfort the distressed and set the prisoner free; so that while some are almost tired and surfeited with superfluities, others are starving and dying for want of necessaries. Nor is this all. It not only hinders men from doing good, but naturally prepares and disposes them to do ill; putteth them upon projects which otherwise they would not be guilty of, to supply their expenses; grinding and oppressing their tenants, detaining poor tradesmen without their money, running in debt and defrauding their creditors, with other meannesses unworthy of a Gentleman, merely that they may support their vanity and extravagance. It is likewise great injustice to a family, dissipates their present possessions if not invades their future reversions, and frequently entails diseases and misery on innocent posterity.

Wherever too there is a spirit of luxury in a people, there is always a spirit of venality and corruption. Their liberties are not half so dear to them as their pleasures. Public spirit is a jest. Their own private interest is all in all. They will sooner sell themselves than take up their cross and deny themselves. Esau will part with his birthright rather than not have the pottage that he desires. And when a people are in such a case, their spirits so weakened and their manners so corrupted, what are they then but *homines ad servitutem parati*,
men

men ripe for slavery, and prepared to fall an easy prey to the first domestic or foreign enemy, rich enough to bribe or powerful enough to invade them? And in fact we may observe that luxury hath been the ruin of the greatest states and kingdoms, as frugality temperance virtue have been the rise of the least and lowest. What a brave hardy people were the Persians under Cyrus? but under Darius, that is in the space of little more than two hundred years, they were grown so soft and effeminate, that there was no need of an Alexander to subdue them. A less formidable enemy would have sufficed for such a conquest. As long as the Athenians and Spartans continued in the institutions of Solon and Lycurgus, as long as they were frugal and temperate, they were a great and free people; but when luxury flowed in upon them, then ruin flowed in upon them, and they became tributaries with the rest of Greece. And was not the case the same with the masters of the world, the Romans? While they preserved their virtue, they maintained their grandeur, and their liberty and their empire might have been immortal, if the same spirit which had possessed the first ages had actuated the last. But the loss of virtue was followed by the loss of liberty, and the loss of liberty by the loss of empire. Luxury (1) did more than the arms of all their enemies, and
revenge

(1)

Savior armis

Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem. Juvenal.

revenged the conquered world; first made them slaves to the arbitrary will of their own citizens, and then yielded them up a prey to foreign enemies. God forbid that the fate of the people of Rome should ever be the fate of the people of Britain! We resemble them too much in their manners, but may we never resemble them in their fall. This however must be said, that luxury is worse and more unnatural in us than in most other nations; for most other nations have the means of luxury more within themselves and more of their own growth, whereas ours are all of foreign growth, are all imported, which is turning our very trade into our ruin, and making "the things which should have been for our wealth an occasion of falling."

III. Such are the fatal effects of this vice with regard to *society*, but the pernicious influence of it will still farther appear by considering it 3dly and lastly with regard to *God and religion*; and we shall constantly find it, if not to begin in irreligion, yet at least to tend and end there. Nothing contributeth more to the debauching of mens morals, and the banishing of all virtue and religion, and even the appearances of virtue and religion, from among us. Nothing is more contrary to the Christian scheme of mortification and self-denial, exposeth men to more temptations, and layeth them more open to the assaults of their spiritual enemies. They are so devoted to the pleasures

pleasures and amusements of this life, that they have little leisure and less inclination to think of the everlasting concerns of the next. They are so taken up with enjoying the good things of the world, that they seldom or never reflect on the great author and bestower of them. Their pleasure is their god, and time with them is more than eternity. What renders their case more desperate is, that they are above all advice, and scorn to listen to the most wholesome reproof. Some signal affliction only can awaken them out of their spiritual lethargy to a sense of their duty. They must be made to smart, that they may be made to feel. The prodigal son, (Luke XV.) who "wasted his substance with riotous living," was in extremity of want, before ever "he came to himself," or had a thought of returning to his father and saying, "Father I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." As long as they live in ease and delicacy, what care they for religion? They who enjoy most gifts, are commonly least thankful to the giver. They may live independent of the world and they would live independent of God too. God hath done the most for their honor, and they do the least again for God's honor; never sanctify his sabbaths, never frequent his sanctuaries, but leave religion as a thing below their notice to the poor and the vulgar; as if the same scene was to be continued always, as if
God

God could not easily change it and punish them for their neglect of him here, as well as call them to a severe account for it hereafter.

It is not expressed indeed, but it is intimated, that the rich man in the parable, "who was cloathed in purple and fine linnen" "and fared sumptuously every day," was as loose in his faith as he was luxurious in his life, believed little or nothing of revealed religion, "heard not Moses and the Prophets;" at least his five brethren did not, who lived in the same gaiety and splendor; and therefore he desired that one might be sent from the dead, "to testify unto them, lest they also come" "into this place of torment." It was luxury that perverted the heart of Solomon to strange women and strange gods. And who then can be certain that he shall be proof against its charms? who can presume that he shall be wiser than the wisest?

It is a hainous crime, as it is pernicious to men, whether private persons or public societies: but the crime is greatly aggravated, as it is so destructive of all faith and religion; and therefore there are such vehement, such repeated declarations made against it in scripture. "Woe unto them," says the prophet Isaiah, (Isa. V. 11, 12.) "that continue until" "night till wine inflame them; and the harp" "and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine" "are in their feasts, but they regard not the" "work of the Lord, neither consider the operation" "ration

“ration of his hands.” Woe unto you that are rich, “for ye have received your consolation; Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger; Woe unto you that laugh now for ye shall mourn and weep,” says our Saviour himself. (Luke VI. 24, 25.) And St. James speaketh with great earnestness, (James V. 1, &c.) “Go to now ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you; ye have lived in pleasure on the earth and been wanton, ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter; ye have condemned and killed the just: crucified the Son of God afresh and put him to an open shame.”

For *God's* sake therefore, for our *country's* sake, for *our own* sake, let us be sober, frugal and temperate in all things. Oh! never may that reflection, so soft and yet so cutting, be applicable to any one of us; “Son remember that thou in thy life time receivedst thy good things.” The love of ourselves, that maketh us to cherish and indulge ourselves, rightly understood would constrain us to be temperate.

Temperance will assist our thoughts and refine our understandings, restrain our unruly appetites and passions and keep all serene and calm within; will preserve health and nourish chearfulness, prevent sickness and starve away pain; will improve our estate or at least never impair it, advance our credit and reputation,

and dispose us to its kindred virtues, frugality, industry, and every thing that will make us greater or wiser or better.

Temperance will promote the happiness of *societies* as well as of *single persons*; will qualify men better for the discharge of their duties in their several stations and callings; will enable them to be more punctual in their dealings, more just to their families, more generous to their dependents, more charitable to the poor; will confirm the loyalty and integrity of a people, encourage a spirit of freedom and independency, and render a nation great at home and glorious abroad.

Temperance, as it is beneficial to *men*, is likewise pleasing to *God*; is more particularly the duty of a Christian and the support of all Christian graces; a friend to every virtue and a foe to every vice; will bless us with contentment in this world, and crown us with everlasting happiness in the world to come.

“ I beseech you therefore, (1 Pet. II. 11.)
 “ as strangers and pilgrims abstain from *luxury*
 “ which warreth against the soul.” “ Every
 “ man that striveth for the mastery (1 Cor.
 “ IX. 25.) is temperate in all things; now
 “ they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but
 “ we an incorruptible.” I will conclude all
 with that pathetic exhortation of Moses to
 the Israelites, so very applicable to the people
 of this nation: (Deut. VIII. 11, &c.) “ Be-
 “ ware lest when thou hast eaten and art full,
 “ and

“ and hast built goodly houses and dwelt
 “ therein, and when thy herds and thy flocks
 “ multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is
 “ multiplied, and all that thou hast is multi-
 “ plied; then thine heart be lifted up, and
 “ thou forget the Lord thy God” who hath
 done all these things for thee; “ and thou say
 “ in thine heart My power and the might of
 “ my hand hath gotten me this wealth; but
 “ thou shalt remember the Lord thy God, for
 “ it is he that giveth thee power to get
 “ wealth; and it shall be, if thou do at all
 “ forget the Lord thy God, I testify against
 “ you this day, that ye shall surely perish;
 “ because ye would not be obedient to the
 “ name of the Lord your God.”

DISSERTATION XXIV.

On our SAVIOUR'S Discourse with the
 Woman of Samaria.

PART THE FIRST.

OUR Saviour leaving Judea and going into
 Galilee must needs pass through Samaria,
 that country lying between Judea and Galilee.
 In his way he cometh to Sichem or Sichar, a
 city of Samaria; and being weary with his
 journey

journey fitteth down by a well, which was called Jacob's well, and perhaps might be digged or at least was frequented by that patriarch. As he was sitting there, his disciples being gone into the city to buy meat, (John IV. 7.) "there cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water;" a woman not of the city of Samaria, but of the country of Samaria, and of the city of Sichar beforementioned; "and Jesus," having nothing to draw with and the well being deep, "saith to her, Give me to drink." The woman, perceiving by his speech and habit that he was a Jew, asketh him again, (ver. 9.) "How is it that thou being a Jew askest drink of me which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews," addeth the evangelist, "have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." We may stop here without entring farther into the story, and make several improving reflections. Upon a superficial reading you may perhaps think that here is nothing particular to detain our attention; but the more you reflect, the more matter you will find for holy meditation. The scripture is as I may say a mine of truth; and that rich ore doth not lie all upon the surface, we must sometimes dig and search below.

1. The reflection that any one will naturally make is upon the *person* with whom our Saviour holdeth this conversation. It is no reproach to the sex to remark, that the person was a *woman*; for our blessed Saviour often vouchsafed to discourse with women as well as with men, the former (contrary to the opinion of some) having souls to be saved as well as the latter. She seemeth too to have been a woman of free life and conversation, for she had had five husbands, and now cohabited with one who was not her husband. But such is the goodness of God, our blessed Saviour (Luke V. 32.) "came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance;" and it is very true as he said, (Matt. XXI. 31. Luke XV. 7.) that "the publicans and the harlots" "go into the kingdom of God before many" "just persons who need no repentance." But what I would principally remark is, that this woman was a *Samaritan*, as our Saviour was a Jew; and there was great enmity between these two nations on account of their religious differences. National antipathy perhaps never rose to a greater highth than it did between these two people. For the Jews were the true descendents of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; the Samaritans pretended to be so, but were really descended from those strange nations which Shalmanezar transplanted into Samaria, when he had carried the Israelites captive into Assyria. The Jews received all

the books of the law and the prophets into their canon of scripture, as we do into ours; the Samaritans on the other hand admitted only the penteteuch or the five books of Moses. The Jews regarded their traditions as much or more than the written law; the Samaritans on the contrary rejected all traditions, and adhered only to the written law. The Jews maintained Jerusalem to be the place of worship; the Samaritans set up temple against temple and altar against altar on mount Gerizim. On these and other accounts such hatred was kindled between the two nations, as is not extinguished even at this day. A Samaritan was to a Jew even more detestable than a Heathen; and though perhaps they might traffic one with another in case of necessity as the disciples went into the city to buy meat, yet there was no civil intercourse or correspondence between them. Hard names and opprobrious language were what they plentifully bestowed on each other; and therefore the Jews, when they would express the highth of their resentment against our Saviour, say, (John VIII. 49.) "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil."

It appears very unreasonable, but such generally is the case, that religious disputes and differences, which of all others should be managed most in the temper of meekness and charity, are yet generally prosecuted with the most extreme violence and fury. Whether it be, that religion being a matter of the greatest concern

concern and importance, men therefore engage the more earnestly for it; or whether by appearing to be zealous for sacred truths they are in hopes of being really thought so; or whether they expect to convince their adversaries by seeming to be convinced themselves; or whether after all they think that their orthodoxy may *cover a multitude of sins*, and notwithstanding their failures in practice their zeal for religion may yet like a fiery chariot carry them to heaven. However it be, that which should most correct and sweeten mens spirits, sours and sharpens them most; begets the most lasting hatred, the most irreconcilable enmity between nations, families, friends; and, as our Saviour himself expresseth it, (Luke XII. 53.) "divideth the father against the son and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter and the daughter against the mother;" (Matt. X. 36.) "and maketh a man's foes them of his own household." Commonly too we may observe, the less the difference between men, the greater still the dissension. The many and greater points in which they agree have not that efficacy to compose and unite them, as the fewer and lesser points in which they differ have to divide and inflame them. The fiercest bigots are often more kindly affectioned to men professedly of no religion than even to the most conscientious persons of another religion. The Jews and the Samaritans, both of them

the worshippers of the true God, would yet at any time rather have conspired with Gentile idolaters against one another than with one another against Gentile idolaters. Nay Christians have been more oppressive and cruel to Christians than to Turks and Heathens; and even Protestants, how often have they contended about forms and ceremonies to the neglect and prejudice of the very essentials of religion? how often have they pursued the differences between themselves so far as to become sometimes the sport, sometimes the prey, of their common enemy, the Church of Rome? But surely such men do not consider, that while they are arguing for religion, at the same time they are acting against it; and do not half so much good by the one, as hurt by the other. They may have "a zeal for God," (Rom. X. 2.) but it is a "zeal not according to knowledge."

How different from this was the conduct of our blessed Saviour toward those who dissented from him and opposed him? how void of passion, how full of meekness? and particularly to the Samaritans, how courteous and obliging was He notwithstanding national prejudices? He seemeth desirous to have overcome these prejudices in others as well as in himself. In St. Luke we read, (Chap. XVI.) that he cleansed once ten lepers, and that one of them was a *Samaritan*, who when he saw that he was healed turned back, and fell at his benefactor's

factor's feet, glorifying God. Upon which our Saviour maketh this reflection to the honor of the Samaritan; "Were there not ten cleansed, but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God save this stranger; And he said unto him Arise, go thy way, thy faith hath made thee whole." In the parable of the traveler who fell among thieves, (Luke X.) we may observe that the persons whom our Saviour maketh to come and look on him and to pass by on the other side were no less men than a Priest and a Levite; but the person whom he maketh to have compassion on him and to bind up his wounds was a Samaritan; designing no doubt by these instances to take off the Jews from their unreasonable prejudices, and to let them understand that how highly soever they might think of themselves and how contemptuously soever of the Samaritans, yet a charitable Samaritan was more deserving than any proud Priest and Levite of them all. And in the chapter now under consideration we see that our Saviour enters into a religious conference even with a woman of Samaria. Jealous as he was of "giving the children's bread unto dogs," and of "casting pearls before swine," he professes his character and opens his doctrine more explicitly to her than to almost any of the Jews themselves.

So tender and compassionate was our blessed Saviour towards those who were really Heretics
and

and Schismatics from the true church of God; how much more then ought we to behave with humanity and gentleness, who are men of like errors and infirmities with themselves? and how cautious ought we to be how we apply such opprobrious ignominious names, and not shoot them like fools arrows at random? Every man is not a Heretic or Schismatic, who cannot think exactly as we do; and however if they were, yet that doth not give any man a right to persecute or use them ill. It is the spirit of Christianity to hurt no man, but on the contrary to do all the good that we can to all within our capacity. We see that no national prejudices, no religious differences could hinder our Saviour from doing good to the Samaritans, and nothing could ever provoke him to do them any evil, no not when they refused to receive him (Luke IX.) because his face was set towards Jerusalem. They rejected him no doubt with a great deal of injurious language; so that some of his disciples were for "commanding fire from heaven to consume them even as Elias did." But what saith Jesus to it? He turned and rebuked his disciples; "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives but to save them."

What then can we think of that Church which stigmatizes all who differ from her for heretics, and then persecutes them for being so? Can that be the only true Church of Christ,

Christ, which encourages such a spirit in her members, not only in direct contradiction to the most express precepts of Christianity, but even in violation of the first principles of common humanity? They may boast of their fifteen marks of the true Church, as I think Bellarmin reckons them; but the mark which our Saviour giveth of the true Church is charity—(John XIII. 35.) “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”—And if charity be the distinguishing mark of the true Church, they have the least pretence to that title of any community in Christendom. We should consider that mens understandings naturally are not all of the same size and capacity; and this natural difference is greatly increased by different education, different employments, different company and the like, so that we may just as reasonably quarrel with men for not having all the same features or not writing all the same hand, as for not being in all points of the same opinion with ourselves. We should consider that no man is infallible any more than the Pope; we are liable to error perhaps as much as others; and they have full as much right to be angry with us for differing from them, as we have to be angry with them for differing from us. We should consider that the best men may sometimes differ in their opinions, as St. Paul (Gal. II. 11.) “withstood” even St. “Peter to the face;” and if there was

was such a difference between two the chiefest apostles, well may there be between inferior mortals. (James III. 13, &c.) "Who" then "is a wise man and endued with knowledge amongst you, let him show out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom; But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts," pretend not that this is a zeal for religion, "glory not and lie not so against the truth; This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish; But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality," or "without wrangling" as it is rendered in the margin, "and without hypocrisy; And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace."

The importance of this article hath made me dwell the longer upon it, and indeed this article of Christian peace and charity, as it is necessary to be insisted upon at all times, so particularly is it at this time, when we are crumbled into so many parties and factions, when every man is for separating and setting up a different congregation, Unitarians, Socinians, and I know not what, and call other Christians idolaters; when also a set of enthusiasts have risen among us, who pretending to extraordinary communications and revelations like the papists, like the papists too abound in
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the bitterest censures and invectives against their Christian brethren, regard themselves as the only true disciples of Jesus, boast themselves as the only true preachers of the gospel, and reprobate and condemn all others as “ vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.” But “ who art thou that judgest another man’s servant,” (Rom. XIV. 4.) and much more thine own superiors? If thy faith is purer and more excellent, show thy faith by thy good works, and not by railing and evil speaking. If thou hast more of the spirit of Jesus, show it in thy meekness, and lowliness, and humbleness of mind; show it in thy obedience to the laws and constitutions of thy country; show it in thy submission to thy ecclesiastical governors and regular pastors; rend not the Church of Christ by an unjust schism and separation, nor fondly imagin that spiritual pride can ever consist with Christian charity. It is in vain to pretend to a better faith, unless we have also more perfect charity than others. (1 Cor. XIII. 2.) “ Though I have all faith, “ so that I could remove mountains, and have “ no charity, I am nothing.” “ Bear ye “ therefore (Gal. VI. 2.) one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”

2. Next to the person with whom our Saviour converseth, we shall naturally reflect upon the *subject* of his conversation and how he *introduceth* it. The subject of his discourse, as of all his discourses, is religion; and he intro-

introduceth it very easily and fitly upon the present occasion. Being weary and thirsty with his journey, he desires to drink of the water that the woman was drawing. She was surprised, and inquires how he who was a Jew could ask drink of her who was a Samaritan? Then Jesus turneth the discourse to a spiritual meaning; and saith that if she had asked of him he would have given her "living water;" and thus introduceth the discourse of his doctrine under that easy metaphor taken from the present scene and the present occasion. Nothing is forced and constrained, all is natural and easy: and it was usual with our Saviour to borrow thus his images and allusions from things upon the spot, and to adapt his discourse to the occasions rather than the occasions to his discourse.

In his sermon on the mount there are many things said in allusion to the eminence on which he sat and to the prospect which lay before him. (Matt. V, VI, VII.) The sun shining over their heads he calleth his disciples "the light of the world." Sitting on a hill himself and probably having some city on a hill in view, he observes that a "city set on a hill cannot be hid." Seeing the birds flying and the lillies growing round about him, he biddeth his disciples with regard to food and cloathing "to behold the fowls of the air and to consider the lillies of the field." It being now the season of fruits, he admonisheth

nistheth of "knowing men by their fruits:" And finally compares the "hearing and doing" of his doctrine to building upon a rock," and the "hearing and not doing of his doctrine" to building upon the sand," which were comparisons taken from objects then present before the eyes of his auditors. In the gospel of St. Mark, (Mark X.) at the sight of little children he speaketh of the "innocence of the elect:" And in the gospel of St. John (John IX.) on occasion of a blind man he discourseth of "spiritual light and spiritual blindness." Being in the temple, where sheep were kept in folds near at hand for the convenience of sacrifices, (John X.) he saith many things in parables of "the sheep and the shepherd." Being in the mount of Olives, a place fruitful of oils and wines, (John XV.) he saith many things in parables of the "vine and the husbandman." On occasion of temporal food (John VI.) he speaketh of "spiritual food and of eating his body" in a mystical manner: As here in the passage before us on occasion of common water he speaketh of "spiritual water, whereof whosoever drinketh shall never thirst."

Abundance of similar instances might be collected; so customary was it with our Saviour to moralize upon every subject, and to turn even the most ordinary occurrences into spiritual improvement. But now by a sad and fatal reverse of things, they who would be presumed

sumed to be the politest and best company, instead of ever promoting any moral and religious discourse endeavor all they can to divert and decline it : and those are become the favorite and reigning diversions, which not only tend no ways to improvement, but cut off all possibility of a rational conversation. A man is almost ashamed in company to be betrayed into a serious reflection ; but as our Saviour said, (Matt. XII. 34, 35.) “ How can ye being evil speak good things ? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh ; a good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.” Vain conceptions will naturally be followed by vain discourse ; and then no wonder ribaldry passeth for wit, and noise for mirth and good humor. But do such persons ever regard this example of Christ, or consider the precepts of Christianity ? (Col. IV. 6.) “ Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt.” (Eph. IV. 29.) “ Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.” (Matt. XII. 37.) “ For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

3. It is observable that our Saviour begins the discourse of his doctrine with a *parable*, and the
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the parable which he maketh use of on the present occasion is that of *water* and *living water*. He begins the discourse of his doctrine with a *parable*, according to the custom of the East, to insinuate the truth in the most agreeable manner, to open it by degrees and not to communicate it all at once, to try at first how it would be relished, and then to impart it more freely afterwards: And the parable which he maketh use of on the present occasion is that of *water* and *living water*, not only as it was excellently adapted to the scene and subject of their conversation as we before observed, but was also a figure of speech seemingly much in use in the eastern stile to express the gifts and graces of God. According to this notion the prophet Jeremiah (II. 13.) calleth God "the fountain of living waters" and the false Gods "broken cisterns that can hold no water; They have forsaken me," "saith the Lord, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns that can hold no water." As God is here stiled "the fountain of living water," so Christ being "the brightness of his father's glory and the express image of his person," is promised by the prophets under the same appellation; (Isa. XXXII. 1, 2.) "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and a man shall be as rivers of water in a dry place:" (Zech. XIII. 1.) "In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the house of David

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“and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” As Christ is called the *fountain*, his doctrine may properly be said to be *the water of that fountain*; “Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters,” saith the prophet Isaiah (LV. 1.) inviting men to embrace the gospel. Our Saviour therefore maketh such frequent use of this figure; therefore he saith to the woman of Samaria, that he would give her *living water*; and therefore he declares in the Revelation, (XXI. 6.) “I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely,” and again (XXII. 17.) “Let him that is athirst come; and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely.” And this metaphor our Saviour adopts with great propriety particularly on two accounts, as water is one of the common blessings of nature, and much valued especially in those hot countries, and being the cause is always considered as the emblem of purity. When our Saviour therefore speaketh of his doctrine under the metaphor of water, he implies that it is not limited to this or that age, is not peculiar to this or that people, but is to be diffused and propagated in all ages and all nations. It is not to be locked up from the people in an unknown tongue for the inspection of priests and monks only: It is *living water*; it is not to stagnate, but to flow and circulate for the use and benefit of mankind. Besides, water being always considered as the emblem of purity,

rity, it is a proper metaphor to denote that purity of life and conversation which the gospel teaches and exacts from us. This is one reason why water is made use of in baptism, to represent unto us by the "washing away of" the filth of the flesh" the washing away as I may say of the filth of the soul, (1 Pet. III. 21.) "and the answer of a good conscience "towards God." "Having therefore" this pure water, (2 Cor. VII. 1.) "let us cleanse "ourselves," as the apostle speaketh, "from "all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfect- "ing holiness in the fear of God."

4. Our Saviour in saying "If thou knewest "the gift of God and who it is that saith to "thee Give me to drink, thou wouldst have "asked of him, and he would have given thee "living water," implies that the knowlege of divine things is well worth our desiring and asking, and that God is ever ready to confer this knowlege on all such as do really desire and ask it. Wisdom is one of the noblest faculties of our nature, and of all wisdom religious wisdom may justly claim the præminence, and deservedly retain the title (which one of the (1) Fathers hath given of it) of "the Art of Arts and Science of Sciences." For this is the knowlege of the most excellent things, the nature and attributes of God, the fall and redemption of man, spirits and angels, heaven and hell, our duty and our happiness in

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(1) Τεχνη τεχνων και επιστημη επισημων. Greg. Naz.

this world and the other. This is a knowledge without which the mind can never rest satisfied; and if it cannot attain the substance, it will still pursue the shadow. The mind, like the fabled island Delos, cannot always float about in uncertainty, but must fix at last, and if it hath not true principles to rest upon, it will rest upon false. All other knowledge is for time, but this is for eternity. A man may be happy with this without any other knowledge, but with any other knowledge without this he must be miserable. "Wisdom is the principal thing," (Prov. IV. 7.) (and by wisdom we all know is meant religious wisdom) "Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." The best way to obtain this heavenly wisdom is by frequent and earnest prayer to God for his blessing upon our studies and searches after truth, that what in us is dark he would enlighten, what is low he would raise, and make us (Psal. CXIX. 18.) "to behold wondrous things out of his law." And if a man offers up such prayers sincerely, truth will be his reward, or error will never be his crime. His sincerity at least will be accepted; and if not requited here, yet infallibly hereafter. Indeed we have all the reason to think that God will requite it here from the consideration of his infinite mercy and goodness; but these considerations are improved into greater certainty by the most express

press assurances of revelation. "If any of
"you lack wisdom," saith St. James, (I. 5.)
"let him ask of God that giveth to all men
"liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be
"given him." And a greater than St. James
observes, (Luke XI. 13.) "If ye being evil
"know how to give good gifts unto your
"children, how much more shall your hea-
"venly Father give the Holy Spirit to them
"that ask him?"

5. One thing more let me just observe be-
fore we conclude. This incident of our Sa-
viour's meeting at a well with a woman of Sa-
maria, how little soever it may appear in itself,
was yet the occasion of her conversion, and the
conversion of many of the Samaritans to the
Christian religion. So true it is, that the
greatest events often depend upon the most mi-
nute and inconsiderable circumstances; and we
may not only experience it in the turns and
changes of our own private lives and fortunes,
but may also see it exemplified in the great re-
volutions and alterations of public govern-
ments. What to men is casual, to God is al-
ways providential. "Not even a sparrow fall-
"eth to the ground without our heavenly Fa-
"ther." (Matt. X. 29, 30.) Nay "the very
"hairs of our heads are all numbered." Where-
fore in all events depend upon providence;
(1 Pet. V. 6, 7.) "Humble yourselves under
"the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt
"you in due time, Casting all your care upon
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“ him for he careth for you.” (Phil. IV. 6; 7.) “ Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

DISSERTATION XXV.

On our SAVIOUR'S Discourse with the Woman of Samaria.

PART THE SECOND.

IT is one of the first principles of natural religion, that man as the creature is to worship God as the creator. From such a relation necessarily ariseth such a duty, and no consequence in numbers or mathematics can be clearer or more certain. But notwithstanding all men see the necessity of worshipping the supreme Being, yet all men do not equally see what manner of worship will be most pleasing and agreeable to him; and therefore so many different forms and rituals have been established in the world, and all are pretended

to be true and genuin, how various and contradictory soever they are one to another. Here then the generality of mankind evidently want some direction; and where can they find it so properly as in the word of God himself? The light of revelation will direct us where the light of nature is deficient; and not only show us the true object of our worship, but teach us also the best manner of worshipping him. (John IV. 24.) "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth."

The words are the sum and substance of our Saviour's discourse with the woman of Samaria. Our Saviour having convinced her by miracle that he was a prophet, she immediately applies to him for satisfaction in the great controversy between the Jews and Samaritans, whether Jerusalem or mount Gerizim was the place of worship where men ought to bring their offerings and sacrifices; (ver. 20.) "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus intimates that this controversy was of very little importance; for the occasions of it would soon be removed, the people taken away, the rites abolished, and the temples destroyed; (ver. 21.) "Woman believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father." However in the mean time he assures her, that the Jews

were in the right and the Samaritans in the wrong; (ver. 22.) "Ye worship ye know not what;" at your first settlement in this country ye joined other gods with the true God, and now ye have not so distinct and perfect a knowledge of him as the Jews: "We know what we worship;" we know more of his nature and his will, having not only the law but the prophets: "For salvation is of the Jews;" the Jews are at present the true church of God, and of them descends the Messiah the Saviour of the world. But this distinction between the Jews and Samaritans, as he had hinted before, was to continue but a little while; (ver. 23.) "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father" neither on mount Gerizim nor yet at Jerusalem, neither after the Samaritan nor yet after the Jewish manner, but "in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him," and hath sent his Son into the world to invite and engage them. The Christian religion now opens a nobler scene, and now begins a higher order of things. The worship of God under the gospel is not limited to place, or tied to forms, but is a spiritual worship suited to his spiritual nature. "God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth." The words contain a proposition, "God is a spirit;" and an inference from this proposition, "and they that worship

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“ship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth;” of which it will be therefore necessary to treat in their order.

I. The proposition “God is a spirit.” A proposition so agreeable to the reason and apprehension of mankind, that the scripture nowhere proveth it, but rather speaketh of it as a thing on all hands allowed and granted. And indeed it is the voice of nature as well as of revelation, the sentiment of thinking heathens in all ages as well of prophets and inspired writers. I remember, one of them, a Roman, particularly says (1), that we cannot conceive otherwise of God, than of a pure and free mind, separate from all mortal composition or mixture. It is true we can hardly frame any tolerable notion of supreme Being, without including in it the idea of a mind or spirit. Imagin a God, and you must imagin him a spirit, or deny most of his attributes and in effect his being itself. For if God was not a spirit, where would be his *immensity*? Wherever there was a vacuum, or wherever there was any other body, he would necessarily be excluded, or we must recur to that absurd notion that the world and all things in it are God. If God was not a spirit, what would become of the *unity* of the divine nature? For all matter consists of parts, and is not

(1) Nec vero deus ipse, qui intelligitur a nobis, alio modo intelligi potest, nisi mens soluta quædam et libera, segregata ab omni concretionem mortali. Cicero, Tusc. I. 27.

not one body but numberless bodies united; nothing can be pure, and homogeneous, and simple, and one but a spirit. If God was not a spirit, where would be his *omnipotence*? For matter is quite passive; being at rest it cannot put itself into motion, and being in motion it cannot lay itself to rest; it is so far from being indued with almighty power, that it seemeth to partake of no power at all; is only an instrument in the hand of spiritual agents, and never properly an agent itself. If God was not a spirit, where would be his *omniscience*? For what evidences, what tokens of understanding, of thought, of apprehension, are there in a piece of matter? Could matter create a human soul, which though confined and imprisoned in a body is yet free in thought to range and traverse the universe? And if a human mind so far transcends all the known properties of matter, how exceedingly and infinitely more must the divine? In short where would be the *moral* attributes of God, his unerring justice, his tender mercy, his diffusive goodness; where would be his providence, and the superintendency and direction of the world, if there was no mind to govern, and matter was all in all? It hath been questioned very justly (2) whether even omnipotence can superadd to matter a faculty of

(2) See Dr. Clarke's Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and the Defenses of it, which I esteem as valuable a part as any of his writings.

of thinking, divisibility and self-consciousness being seemingly inconsistent and incompatible the one with the other. But even (3) they, who have believed it possible for omnipotence to superadd to matter a faculty of thinking, have yet asserted and maintained, that the first, eternal, thinking being could not possibly be material.

But we must not only not conceive the deity to be material, but we must not imagin him to be any thing like a man, a spirit cloathed with a body, limited to any shape, or circumscribed within any figure whatever. It is true, the scripture often speaketh of God under sensible images and representations. An eye, a hand, an arm and other parts of a human body are frequently attributed to him. Our very passions and affections are ascribed to the divine nature, love, hatred, joy, sorrow, repentance, anger and the like, which are the properties of imbodied spirits. But we shall be very gross interpreters of the sacred text, if we understand these figures of speech strictly and literally. The inspired writers in these cases, as one of them says expressly, (Rom. VI. 19.) "speak after the manner of men because of the infirmities of our flesh." The scripture in these instances plainly accommodates itself to the weakness of our capacities; and it would be wonderfully ungrateful to God, because he is pleased to speak like

*(3) Mr. Locke and others.

like a man, to fancy therefore that he exists like one; because he graciously condescends to our infirmities, to abuse his gracious condescension to the reproach and blemish of the divine nature. But let us not be evil, because he is good. Infinity and immensity cannot be bounded by any figure; neither can a spirit to bodily eyes ever be visible. "No man hath seen God at any time," says St. John, (John I. 18.) He is "the invisible God; no man hath seen him or can see him," says St. Paul: (1 Tim. I. 17. VI. 16.) and when Moses desired to see the face of God, God answered him (Exod. XXXIII. 20.) "Thou canst not see my face, for there shall no man see me and live." We may see God in his operations, as we may see our understandings in our actions; but actually see God with our eyes we can no more than we can see our own souls.

But neither is this sufficient; we must raise our thoughts yet higher. We must not only not conceive the supreme Being to be an embodied spirit; but even when we speak of him as a spirit without a body, we must not imagine him to be like a human soul. Man may be said indeed to be made "in the image of God," as he is made a rational and immortal soul; but he is a very faint image and resemblance, a copy that falleth infinitely short of the great original. He is probably one of the lowest in the scale of intelligent beings.
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And as in the material world we see things gradually rise higher and higher from inanimate matter to man, so by analogy we may conclude, that in the spiritual world also things rise higher and higher from man towards the infinite perfections of God. This we are certain of that there is infinitely a greater distance between God and man than between man and the most inorganical piece of matter. And as the scripture maketh use of several appellations, *angels* and *archangels*, *cherubim* and *seraphim*, *thrones* and *dominions*, *principalities* and *powers*, these names in all probability are not applied without a determinate meaning, but are so many different denominations of so many different ranks and orders of beings. "In my Father's house," says our Saviour, (John XIV. 2.) "are many mansions;" and doubtless many mansions are not for one species of beings, but for many. It is highly probable, that there are infinitely more species of beings in the invisible world above us, than there are in the visible world below us. And the sorts and species of angels may differ as much these from those, and those again from some others, as animals from men, or men from angels. One sort may possibly be invested with bodies of a nicer frame and texture than ours, others may still have finer bodies than these or be cloathed with some aerial vehicle, a third sort may be cloathed with an æthereal finer than any aerial body, and a fourth

fourth sort may be without any æthereal body whatever, and be all life and understanding, all soul and spirit. But after all, with our utmost force and compass of thought, when we have imagined the most pure, the most knowing, the most powerful, the most perfect spirit that we can, there will still be a spirit infinitely more pure, more knowing, more powerful, more perfect than any that we can imagin, and that spirit, with the addition of all other infinite perfections, is God, "the first and the last, the beginning and the end, the king of kings, and the lord of lords."

II. It may suffice to have said thus much of the proposition in the text, "God is a spirit;" and now for the inference from this proposition, "and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The worship of God "in spirit and in truth" may be opposed to the carnal ordinances and typical ceremonies of the Jews and Samaritans; but there is no necessity for understanding the words in so particular and limited a sense. The proposition in the text is general and absolute, and this inference from it may be understood in the same manner. Neither do I conceive that the words *spirit* and *truth* have exactly the same meaning, or are different expressions only for the same thing; for each word seemeth to convey a distinct and different idea. To worship God *in spirit* is to worship

worship him in a spiritual manner, in opposition to mere external rites and ceremonies; and to worship him *in truth* is to worship him with sincerity, in opposition to the constrained and formal devotion of hypocrites.

To worship God *in spirit* is to worship him in a spiritual manner in opposition to mere external rites and ceremonies. He is a spirit himself, and therefore is to be worshipped in spirit. Not that all bodily worship is excluded under the gospel, as some would infer from this text, but infer without any reason. For what are the Christian sacraments but rites and ceremonies of divine institution? and do we not serve and worship God in them with external service and worship? And as to bodily gestures kneeling and the like, doth not St. Paul say of himself (Eph. III. 14.) "I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?" Doth not our Saviour himself, when he prayeth for his apostles, (John XVIII. 1.) "lift up his eyes to heaven?" and when he prayeth in the garden, (Luke XXIII. 41. Matt. XXVI. 39.) doth he not "kneel down," and even "fall upon his face?" We consist of a body and a soul; and we are therefore to "glorify God in our body and in our spirit which are God's." (1 Cor. VI. 20.) But as the soul is the principle of life, the seat of reason, the particle of divinity, we must worship him with this chiefly, or we shall offer him no better than a noisome carcase instead of

of "a living sacrifice, which is our reasonable service." (Rom. XII. 1.) External adoration without a suitable inward affection, is of no more value than an empty casket when the jewels are taken away.

In the darker and more illiterate ages of the church there was a sect of Christians, who received their denomination [Anthropomorphites] from their opinion, that the deity subsisted in a human form: and where men's notions are so low and depraved, their religion will be low and depraved in proportion. But we, who live as I may say in the light and the sun, who can demonstrate by reason, who can prove by revelation, that God is a pure spirit, infinite in himself and infinite in all perfections, we are certainly obliged to worship him in a more spiritual and refined manner, to make our bodies the temple of the Lord, and our souls the holy of holies. A Heathen could say that (4) the best, the most chaste, the most holy and the most pious worship of the Gods is, that we reverence and adore them always with a pure, entire, and incorrupt mind and voice. And how unreasonable then are those Christians, who load and incumber their religious service with so many forms and ceremonies, as eat out the heart and substance of all inward piety and devotion? A man must be

(4) Cultus autem Decorum mus atque sanctissimus plenissimusque pietatis, ut eos semper pura,

be an able master of the ceremonies perfectly to understand a Roman ritual. And what can be the use and design of so much pomp and splendor? There is no need of gilding gold; that is only for baser metals and counterfeits. Such foppery in religion is like paint to a good face; it not only hideth the real beauty under a false lustre, but in effect ruins and destroys it. Nay they not only debase the spiritual nature of the christian religion, but dishonor the spiritual nature of God himself, representing him (as we may see commonly in their altar-pieces and in their manuals of devotions) in the form of an old man, and worshipping him (if they do really worship him) through the medium of an image.

But whatever they may think of it, it is idolatry to worship not only the false Gods, but even the true God by any image or sensible representation. The bowing down to an idol constitutes idolatry, whoever is represented by that idol. When the Israelites made their golden calf, they were not so gross as to imagine that the very calf which they had just then made was the God who brought them up out of the land of Egypt; they designed it only as a representation, and in the story they are said (Exod. XXXII. 5.) to proclaim "a feast to the Lord:" but yet for all this the scripture chargeth them with idolatry, and

pura, integra, incorrupta et mente et voce veneremur. Cic. de Nat. Deor. II. 28.

they were punished accordingly. In like manner the golden calves, which were afterwards set up in Dan and Bethel, were intended for the representations of the God of Israel; but still they were idols, and the worshippers of them were idolaters. What was the case also of the heathen world? Were they so stupid as to imagin stocks and stones to be Gods? No, but "when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, but changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man:" and thus, as the apostle says, (Rom. I. 21, &c.) "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools."

For how is it possible for an image to raise our conceptions to a spirit? What likeness, what resemblance is there between them? As the psalmist saith (Psal. CXXXV. 18.) speaking of idols, "They that make them are like unto them, so is every one that trusteth in them." It was one of the great ends and designs of our Saviour's coming into the world, not only to banish all the idols of the Heathens, but likewise to cancel and abolish all the ceremonies of the Jews. A pure and spiritual worship is now required of us, without any ceremonies but such as instead of clogging and debasing exalt and improve our devotion. If the mind be thoroughly affected, we shall naturally show it in suitable gestures and emotions of body; and those gestures and emotions of body will again rise and elevate the

the affections of the mind ; the body acting back again upon the soul, as the soul acteth upon the body. And we can never raise our thoughts and affections too high. As we are to " love God," (Mark XII. 33.) so we are to worship him, " with all the heart, and " with all the understanding, and with all " the soul, and with all the strength ;" and this " is more than all whole burnt-offerings " and sacrifices."

To worship God *in truth* is to worship him with sincerity, in opposition to the constrained and formal devotion of hypocrits. Sincerity is the life and soul of religion : hypocrisy weareth only the cloak and the vizard. Hypocrisy maketh even our best works an abomination, turneth our very prayers into sin : sincerity is the best recommendation of our virtues if we are in the right, the best palliation and excuse for our errors if we happen to be in the wrong. If we are swayed more by religious motives than by worldly considerations, more by conscience than by interest ; if we are as careful to do nothing amiss in private and when alone, as in public and before company ; if our resolutions of obedience are universal and unlimited, without any reserve or distinction for a favorite passion or darling inclination ; if the general tenor of our lives and actions is agreeable to our holy profession, and free from any grosser instances of sin, though not free from human infirmities ; if we are

not lazily contented with our present attainments in virtue, but are still aspiring after greater perfection, (Phil. III. 13.) “forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before;” if we keep our integrity equally amid the smiles of prosperity and the frowns of adversity, neither temptations can allure us nor dangers deter us; then may we be said to serve and worship God in sincerity, then (1 John III. 21.) will “our hearts condemn us not, and we may have confidence towards him.”

It is not the formality of going to church, the frequenting of prayers or hearing of sermons, that will justify us in the sight of God; for it is evident that some persons, while they are there, are more employed in gazing about, than in expressing the reverence due to the supreme Being, before whom they stand and for whose sake they are supposed to come thither: or perhaps their religion is all outside, and though they “honor God with their lips,” (Matt. XV. 8.) yet “their hearts may be far from him:” or perhaps the other parts of their lives and actions are not answerable to these beginnings; they may “receive the word with joy,” (Luke VIII. 13, 14.) but soon “choak it with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.” It is certain “the form of godliness” is not always accompanied with “the power;” and perhaps, as in civil matters where

where is most ceremony and compliment, there commonly the least is meant or intended; so likewise in religious matters where is most of "the form of godliness," there may be least "of the power."

But on whom would they impose? "He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" (Psal. XCIV. 9.) He that is the father of spirits, the author and giver of our souls, shall he not understand all their thoughts and motions? shall he not know our hearts, who is more intimate with us, than we are with ourselves? If God was a man like ourselves, we might probably impose upon him with formal speeches and empty professions, and perhaps the more formal and empty the more imposing: but if we think to deceive him, we shall be miserably mistaken, we shall only deceive ourselves. The greatest hypocrits are the greatest self-deceivers. "All things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." (Heb. IV. 13.) He registers our most secret actions now, and hereafter they will be published and exposed on the theatre of the world in the sight of men and angels. "For God will bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or bad." (Eccles. XII. 14.) "Beware therefore of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy; For there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither

“hid that shall not be known.” (Luke XII. 1, 2.) And “Grace be with all them,” as the apostle speaketh, (Eph. VI. 24.) “who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.” He that is not a sincere Christian, is no Christian. And do thou, O God, who tryest the hearts and reins, and requirest truth in the inward parts, do thou (Psal. XIX. 12, 13, 14.) “keep back thy servants not only from presumptuous sins, but cleanse us also from our secret faults, that the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord our strength and our redeemer.”

DISSERTATION XXVI.

On our SAVIOUR's Eloquence.

ELOQUENCE is a perfection that few indeed attain, though it be what many study and what all admire. The truth is, we must think well, before we can speak well. No man ever thought like the blessed Jesus, and therefore no man ever spake like him. He was the Word, the Word of God; and no wonder therefore that he was never equaled by man.

man. When he was yet only twelve years old, he was found in the temple (Luke II. 46, 47.) "sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions; And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers." Afterwards, when he had entered upon his public ministry, and was preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, his countrymen though they were prejudiced against him, (Luke IV. 22.) "all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth." When Jesus at the feast of tabernacles went up into the temple, and there taught the Jews, (John VII. 15, 16.) they "marveled saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" To which question the only proper answer could be what Jesus replied, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me." But the effect of our Saviour's eloquence is no where more remarkable, than in the following story, related by St. John (VII. 32—46.) The chief priests and pharisees, observing that the people began to entertain him for the Messiah, thought it high time to put a stop to his progress, and sent their officers to apprehend and bring him before them. After some time the officers return but without Jesus. Upon this the chief priests and pharisees provoked asked them "Why have ye not brought him?" The officers answer without any reserve, "Never man

“ spake like this man.” Their rage was charmed down by his discourse, and they could not lay hands on him.

A marvelous instance this of the force of eloquence and hardly to be paralleled in history. I remember they relate in commendation of Cicero, what a wonderful effect one of his orations had upon Cæsar. Ligarius was prosecuted for having been in arms against Cæsar; Cicero undertakes his defense and pleads his cause, which Cæsar permitted more out of compliment to the orator for the pleasure of hearing him, than out of any motive of justice to the criminal for he was determined to condemn him. But Cicero had no sooner begun his oration than Cæsar was moved; and the more he says, the more he is moved; he trembles; he changes countenance; he drops the papers which were in his hand; the victor is vanquished; the orator prevails; and the criminal is acquitted. But what is all this to the instance before us? Cæsar was a person of great humanity and clemency, of fine taste and learning, and therefore it is the less surprising that he should be affected by such an oration from such an orator; being eloquent himself he could not be insensible to the charms of eloquence. Or perhaps it was only one piece of artifice played off against another. Cæsar's emotions might be all affectation. He might counterfeit a rapture more than he felt, and pretend to be won against his will to Cicero's purpose,

purpose, that he might the more effectually gain Cicero to his own. The oration itself, which is extant, would induce this opinion; for there is nothing so very extraordinary in the composition, nothing that so much excites our admiration, as those effects which it is said to have had upon Cæsar. But that men of no learning and humanity (such as the inferior officers, employed in seizing and arresting of persons, usually are) that they should be softened by eloquence; that they should pay more regard to the words of Jesus than to their Lords and Master's positive order; that they should venture rather to offend them than commit the least violence to him; that they should not only have the goodness to be moved by his divine discourse but have the courage also to own it, and plead it in their excuse and justification; are such effects indeed as evidently demonstrate without their telling us, that "never man spake like this man."

To particularize all the beautiful passages in our Saviour's divine discourses would be little less than to transcribe the gospels. We can touch only upon a few of them; and for method's sake we will consider them under the three heads of his *precepts*, his *parables*, and his *occasional discourses*.

I. As to our Saviour's *precepts*. The great beauty of a precept is that it be clear and that it be short; clear, that it may be readily understood,

derstood, and (i) short that it may easily be remembered. The precepts and laws of Christ are excellent in both these respects, and not like modern laws verbose and intricate; so prolix and numerous that it is a great expense even to purchase the volumes, and frequently so worded, that they serve to perplex rather than inform, to beget disputes rather than end them. Indeed nothing can be expressed with more brevity and at the same time with more perspicuity than all our Saviour's moral discourses. The sense of them is so sublime, that they afford instruction to the wisest; the language of them is so plain, that they transcend not the capacity of the meanest. The sentiments ennoble the style, the style familiarizes the sentiments. The Heathen moralists, even the best and politest of them, fall infinitely short of him in the expression as well as in the matter. Many a single period of his conveys more instruction, and with more force, with more energy than whole chapters of theirs.

Of all his moral discourses his Sermon upon the mount (as it is usually called) I think we may reckon the best, for the same reason that Cicero did one of Demosthenes's orations, because it is the longest. There is a system of morals how short and yet how comprehensive! With what simplicity and plainness delivered, and yet with what dignity and authority! not

(1) *Quicquid præcipies, esto brevis.*

Hor.

Ἡμῶντα βραχὺν ἀξιωματικώτερον.

Plat. in Protag.

only

only surpassing all the Heathen moralists, but improving and adding perfection even to the law and the prophets! How beautifully doth this divine discourse open with the beatitudes, and in the beatitudes how elegantly doth the latter member of each period answer to the former, the reward of the virtue to the virtue itself! (Matt. V. 4, &c.) "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted; "blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled; blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!" Nothing could be more suitable to the spirit and character of that religion, which was designed to be a blessing in the earth—It is a very good moral to do our alms privately not to be seen of men; but our Saviour inlivens it with a vigorous *Prosopopœia* that giveth great force and emphasis to the sentence; (Matt. VI. 3.) "When thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth."—"Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you do ye even so to them," (Matt. VII. 12.) is an axiom worth a volume; and well might the Roman Emperor Alexander engrave it on the walls of his palace and carry it on the banners of his army.—In short we may in some measure judge of the excellence of this discourse by the effect that it had upon the audience; the people "were astonished" says the sacred historian (Matt. VII. 29.) "at his doctrine, "for he taught them as one having authority
"and

“ and not as the scribes;” he did not like the Jewish doctors descant upon the traditions of the elders; but he spake to them like one commissioned from heaven with authority and majesty. *Nec vox hominem sonat*. That may be truly applied to him, which was falsely and fulsomely addressed to Herod, (Acts XII. 22.)

“ It is the voice of a God and not of a man.”

Some of the (2) fathers are of opinion, that out of the writings of the philosophers might be collected a system of morals not unlike those of the gospel: and it must be admitted indeed, that there are many noble truths in them though clouded with great error and superstition; there is some pure and genuin ore, though mixed with an infinite deal of dross. Apelles from the beauties of Greece drew his picture of Venus; and it may be, from the philosophers of Greece a skilful hand might exhibit a true portrait of virtue: But though it might be like, it would never be equal; the Heathen virtue would be as much inferior to the Christian as humanity to divinity.

II. As to our Saviour's *parables*. The people of the east have ever delighted in the bold figurative ways of speaking; and particularly in fables, allegories, and parables. Their imagination like their sun is warmer, their stile like their fruit is richer and of higher flavor, than ours in these northern climates. Our Saviour therefore properly maketh frequent use

(2) Justin Mart. Apol. 1. Lactant. lib. 7.

of parables in accommodation to the taste and genius of his country. And without doubt this is a more lively, agreeable, entertaining method of instruction than dry precept or narration; it (3) mixes the profitable with the pleasant, and delights and improves together. But this is not all; our Saviour hath usually some farther view; there are reasons of still greater fitness and propriety.

Sometimes he involves his discourse in parables, because of the unsuitness of some of his audience, because they were not of dispositions and tempers to hear the whole truth; weak and prejudiced understandings being as little able to bear too much truth, as sore or weak eyes too much light. Thus for instance when he discoursed to a mixt audience of his disciples and the multitude about the nature and future success of his kingdom, such pearls were not to be cast before swine, and therefore he wrapped up his doctrine in the parables of *the sower*, of *the tares*, of *the mustard-seed* and others as may be seen at large in the XIIIth chapter of St. Matthew. All these things he explained in the house to his disciples, but to the rest he spake in parables, it is his own reason and in his own words, (ver. 13, 14, 15.)
 " because they seeing see not, and hearing they
 " hear not, neither do they understand; And
 " in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias
 " which saith, By hearing ye shall hear and

(3) Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci. Hor.

" shall

" shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see
 " and shall not perceive; for this peoples heart
 " is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of
 " hearing, and their eyes they have closed,
 " lest at any time they should see with their
 " eyes, and hear with their ears, and should
 " understand with their heart, and should be
 " converted and I should heal them."

Sometimes he involves his discourse in parables, to insinuate an offensive truth which perhaps it might not be safe for him to speak more plainly, making use of figures as we do of eloaths not only for ornament but for defense. Thus for instance the calling and election of the Gentiles, the reprobation and rejection of the Jews were points to be handled very tenderly for fear of giving offense; and certainly he would have exposed himself to danger, and probably have pulled down immediate vengeance upon his head, if he had spoken his sentiments freely and without reserve or disguise. It was therefore great art and prudence in him to veil these offensive truths (Matt. XXI. and XXII.) in the parables of *the wicked husbandmen* and *the marriage of the king's son*; and so, though they apprehended his meaning well enough, yet they had not matter whereof to accuse him.

Sometimes he maketh use of several parables to illustrate and enforce the same point of doctrine, the same representation not affecting all alike, but one image striking one man, another

ther another. Thus for instance in one chapter (Luke XV.) we have the parables of *the lost sheep*, of the *lost piece of money*, and of *the prodigal son*; and all to represent the joy that there is among good angels and good men at the repentance and conversion of a sinner.

In all his parables there is observed the greatest decency and delicacy with a bias commonly to the charitable side, as if he was willing to believe that the number of the good was at least equal to that of the bad; as in the parable of *the prodigal son*, (Luke XV.) if he was bad and wasted his substance with riotous living, his brother was good and always lived with and was obedient to his father; in the parable of *the ten virgins*, (Matt. XXV.) if five were foolish, the other five were wise; and in the parable of *the talents*, if there was one who buried his talent and therefore was punished, there were two who doubled theirs, and therefore were rewarded.

In reality whole sermons may be witten upon any one of our Saviour's parables; and therefore it is not to be expected, that in one part only of a discourse we can be able to comprise the beauties of them all. In all he sheweth himself an excellent painter; His parables are the most lively pictures; nothing is too much, nothing is wanting; we not only read, but we see the things as it were before our eyes. And if any one entertains the least doubt of this, let him only peruse for his conviction
the

the parables of *the Rich man and Lazarus*, and of *the prodigal son*. That of *the Rich man and Lazarus* is so natural and lively, that many have questioned whether it is a parable or a real story : And if any man can read that of *the prodigal son* without the tenderest emotions, he must have a very bad heart or a very bad head, must be a merciless cruel father or a graceless profligate son.

III. As to our Saviour's *occasional discourses*. These are all with wonderful discernment and address adapted to the places where, and to the times when, to the occasions upon which, and to the persons to whom, they were spoken.

In some former dissertations several instances have been given of the great ease and propriety of his discourses ; his conversation was never forced and constrained, but naturally flowing from objects which then surrounded him, from occurrences which then arose, from the times of the day or the seasons of the year, from things said or done by persons then present. He was too not altogether an incurious observer of what passed on the great stage of the world, as may be collected from some of his allusions to public transactions. When he spake (Luke XIV. 31.) of " one king going forth with ten thousand men to meet another coming against him with twenty thousand ;" he plainly had in view what had happened just before to (4) Herod the tetrarch, imprudently leading his

(4) Joseph. Antiq. Lib. 18. Cap. 6. Edit. Hudson.

army through Judea to fight with Aretas king of Arabia, who came against him with superior forces and defeated him. When he delivered the parable (Luke XIX. 13, &c.) of "a certain nobleman going into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom and to return," and of "his enemies hating him and sending a message after him, saying We will not have this man to rule over us; and it came to pass that when he was returned having received the kingdom, then he commanded his enemies, which would not that he should reign over them, to be brought and slain before him;" he manifestly alluded to the (5) case of Archelaus, who went to Rome to solicit the emperor that he might be instated in his father's kingdom, and the Jews sent an embassy after him, to petition and plead against him, but however he was confirmed in the kingdom of Judea, and when he returned took ample vengeance of his enemies and opposers. When our Saviour said to his disciples (Luke XXII. 25.) "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors;" he reflected upon the vanity of the princes of those times, who delighted in such titles, when they ought to have been called *tyrants* and *robbers* more than *benefactors*. Other instances without doubt there are of the same kind, whereof the history

(5) Joseph. *ibid.* Lib. 17. Cap. 13.

is not known at present, as when he spake (Luke XIV. 28, 29.) of a man "intending to build a tower, and laying the foundation, and not being able to finish it, and all that beheld it mocking him." All these occurrences he converted to moral and religious uses.

Not only nothing improper ever fell from him, but every thing he says is perfectly just and proper. Even they, who were sent to watch him and insnare him in his discourse, were so far from succeeding in their attempts, that they went away wondering at him and his answers; nothing showing greater ability and presence of mind than dextrous replies upon the sudden to captious insnaring questions. In the VIIIth chapter of St. John we have an account of a woman taken in adultery. The scribes and pharisees bring her to Jesus and say unto him, (ver. 4, 5, 6.) "Master this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act; now Moses in the law commanded us that such should be stoned, but what sayest thou? This they said tempting him" (says the historian) "that they might have to accuse him." And indeed the question was subtle enough; for if he had answered in the affirmative, that she should be stoned, they would have accused him to the Roman governor for assuming a judicial authority in capital cases; and if he had answered in the negative, that she should not be stoned, they would have accused him to the

Jews for speaking contrary to the law of Moses. What course therefore doth he take under this dilemma! Why, he skilfully evades giving a direct answer either way; he neither acquits nor condemns her; only says, (ver. 7.) "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." And the event was, (ver. 9.) "They were convicted by their own conscience, and went out one by one." In the XXIIId chapter of St. Matthew we read, that the Pharisees with the Herodians were sent to tempt him with this question, (ver. 17.) "whether it was lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar or not." And here lay the difficulty, if he had declared for the payment, he would have offended the Pharisees who were assertors of the privileges and immunities of the people of God; if he had declared against the payment, he would have offended the Herodians who were friends and advocates of the Roman government: by the one he would have incurred the censure and hatred of the Jews; by the other he would have made himself obnoxious to the civil magistrate. How therefore doth he behave upon this occasion? Why, he determines nothing to offend either side himself, but artfully draweth a conclusion out of their own mouth, (ver. 19, 20.) "Show me the tribute-money; Whose is this image and superscription?" Upon their saying, Cæsar's, "Render therefore," says he, (ver. 21.) "unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and
H 2 " unto

“unto God the things that are God’s.” The insinuation and address are incomparable. The Pharisee, could not be offended at the former clause, and must be pleased with the latter; the Herodian could not be offended at the latter clause, and must be pleased with the former. Both parties (ver. 22.) “marveled and “left him.” There are other instances in the same chapter; but we have not time to insist upon them at present. The issue of all was, (ver. 46.) “No man was able to answer “him a word, neither durst any man from “that day forth ask him any more questions.”

It is not only in one stile and manner of speaking that he is a master, but he wears all dresses and charms in all. When the subject requires sharpness and severity, can any thing be expressed with greater vehemence and acrimony than his reprehension of the scribes and pharisees hypocrits? No satire in Juvenal is so pointed, or carries such a sting in it, as the XXIII^d chapter of St. Matthew. When the subject calleth for pity and commiseration, can any thing be conceived and uttered with greater pathos and tenderness than his lamentation over Jerusalem? None of the dying strains in the old tragedians exceed or even equal it. (Luke XIX. 41, 42.) “And when he was come near, “he beheld the city and wept over it, saying “if

(6) There is a remarkable passage about our Saviour’s silence in one of the Fathers.

It is in Ignatius his Epistle to the Ephesians; Εἰς τὴν διδασκαλίαν, ὅς τις καὶ ἡσίο, ἢ ὁρίων δὲ ἀποποι-
 2419

“ if thou hadst known, even thou, at least in
 “ this thy day the things which belong unto
 “ thy peace, but now they are hid from thine
 “ eyes.” (Matt. XXIII. 37.) “ O Jerusalem,
 “ Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and
 “ stonest them which are sent unto thee, how
 “ often would I have gathered thy children to-
 “ gether, even as a hen gathereth her chickens
 “ under her wings, and ye would not !” Can
 any thing be more easy and familiar than his
 discourse in his ordinary conversation ? Can
 any thing be more grand and sublime than what
 he says upon great occasions ? As when he said
 unto the sea, (Mark III. 39.) “ Peace be still,
 “ and the wind ceased and there was a great
 “ calm ;” and as when he cried unto Lazarus
 in his grave, (John XI. 43, 44.) “ Lazarus
 “ come forth, and he that was dead came
 “ forth.” His very (6) silence is sublime as
 well as his eloquence : And as an instance that
 he knew both how to speak and how to be
 silent with dignity, we need only read the ac-
 count of his behaviour at his trial. In short
 his eloquence is equaled by nothing but his
 goodness ; and this it is that giveth such a
 force to the other. There are men who can
 talk and write like angels ; but while they live
 like devils, such eloquence is no better than
 “ sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.” It is
 the rule laid down by the Rhetoricians, that

ἡμεν αξία τε παρθε- 519· ὁ λόγον Ἰησοῦ ἡσυχίας αὐτῆς ἀκροῖν, hear his very
 κεινημεν· αληθως δυνασθαι και της silence.

to be good orators we must be good men. Jesus as he was the best of orators was also the best of men. His virtue raised and dignified his eloquence ; his eloquence adorned and illustrated his virtue.

We have confined our observations to some passages in the gospels, but we might as easily have extended them to the whole bible. The bible is not only the standard of truth, but exhibits also some of the finest specimens of oratory ; is not only the best body of divinity, but excels all other books in diction as well as in matter. Moses is as much before other historians in merit as in time. (7) Longinus himself speaketh of him as no ordinary writer, and citeth his account of the creation as an instance of the true sublime. What masterly paintings and descriptions are there in the book of Job ? what sublime tropes and figures in the prophet Isaiah ? how exceedingly surpassing the boldest happiest flights of Homer and Virgil ? What an infinitely richer vein of finer sense, finer poetry, runs through the psalms than any of the hymns of Horace and Pindar ? Is there any thing in Theocritus comparable to that divine pastoral the Song of Solomon ? And what are the sentences of Theognis or the golden verses of Pythagoras in the balance with the book of Proverbs ? And to come yet lower, produce the noblest passages out of Plato and Demosthenes, and yet nobler both in sentiment

(7) Long. de Subl. sect. 9.

and diction may be produced out of St. Paul. It is true we commonly read the sacred authors under the disadvantages of a literal prose-translation, and that not so correct and perfect as it might be: but even all these disadvantages cannot totally cloud and eclipse their beauties; their superior spirit, like the sun, every now and then breaks forth, and warms and transports us whether we will or not. So that (as Dr. South (8) observes) “ He
“ who would not read the scripture for fear
“ of spoiling his stile, shewed himself as much
“ a blockhead as an atheist, and to have as
“ small a gust of the elegancies of expression
“ as of the sacredness of the matter.” Never let us so foolishly abandon truth, sense, reason, every thing, in affectation of a false politeness. Never let us be (Psal. LVIII. 4, 5.)
“ like the deaf adder, that stoppeth her ear,
“ and will not hearken to the voice of charm-
“ ers, charming never so wisely.” If Gentlemen could be induced to read the Scripture, only as they read the Classic Authors; if they were averse from it as their duty, and did it only as a thing of rational entertainment; they would infallibly find their account in the experiment, and though perhaps they might not meet with so many of the little accuracies of writing, yet they could not fail of being entertained with truer, nobler, and more sublime beauties than any in the finest produc-

(8) South's Sermons Vol. 4. p. 32.

tions of Greece or Rome. If they are men of taste, they cannot but admire; if they are men of taste and religion too, they cannot but reverence. There are such graces and ornaments of speech, as must please even though they were destitute of truth: and there is such truth, as must ever charm even though it was stript of all graces and ornaments. Every good Christian therefore may properly take up the words of the psalmist, and apply them to the scripture as well for the richness and variety of the stile as for the truth and excellence of the matter: (Psal. XIX. 7, &c.)

“ The law of the Lord is perfect, converting
 “ the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure
 “ making wise the simple; The statutes of
 “ the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
 “ the commandment of the Lord is pure, in-
 “ lighting the eyes; The fear of the Lord
 “ is clean, enduring for ever; the judgments
 “ of the Lord are true and righteous alto-
 “ gether; More to be desired are they than
 “ gold, yea than much fine gold; sweeter
 “ also than honey and the honey-comb;
 “ Moreover by them is thy servant warned,
 “ and in keeping of them there is great
 “ reward.”

DISSERTATION XXVII.

CHRISTIANITY our true Liberty.

LIBERTY is one of the greatest blessings and prerogatives of life; that which giveth us a true taste and relish of all the rest; and therefore it cannot be too much prized and valued where it is, nor too earnestly desired and sought after where it is not. All men are naturally born to it, and yet alas how small a part of the world really enjoys it. If they are not slaves to others, yet men are commonly slaves to themselves, to their own lusts and passions. But this however we may assert, that wherever true government is maintained, wherever true religion is practised, there is perfect liberty. Religion indeed hath been often represented in a different light, and one of the principal objections made to it by profane men is that it abridgeth us of our natural liberties, and layeth us under such restraints, as human nature is not able to bear; it is fit for nothing, say they, but to curb and break mens spirits, and to render them tame and tractable to be ridden at pleasure by priests and princes. And indeed as religion hath been managed in several countries, it is little better than an engin of slavery, a politic device and instru-

instrument for some men more easily to govern others, to make their "godliness" their "gain," and to "lord it over God's heritage." But the author of our religion should certainly best understand the nature and end and design of it: And we have him declaring it to be so far from enslaving mankind, that the true religion will make us free; (John VIII. 31, 32.) "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Our liberties may be considered of two kinds, *civil* and *religious*; and it may be asserted, that Christianity is no enemy to our *civil*, and is a great friend to our *religious* liberties. And as the subject of liberty is always pleasing and entertaining to generous spirits, so is it more especially proper and seasonable at a time when so much unreasonable noise and clamor are excited, so many mistaken notions are propagated, and unbounded licentiousness prevails under the specious name of liberty.

I. With regard to our *civil* liberties Christianity was not designed to make any alteration in them, but to leave the governments of the world, as it found them. But if it hath done nothing to advance and improve our rights and privileges, yet neither hath it done any thing to infringe and lessen them. St. Paul (Rom. XIII. 2.) calleth government "the ordinance of God," St. Peter (1 Pet. II. 13.) speaketh

eth of it as "the ordinance of man." And indeed government in general may be called "the ordinance of God," as being perfectly agreeable to his will, and promoting the ends of his providence; but the particular sorts of government, the particular powers of governors, these are constituted by mutual agreement and compact expressed or implied between the governors and the governed: As marriage in general is a divine institution, but the marriage of any particular couple is founded in mutual agreement and compact between the man and the woman.

The place of scripture, where obedience to the civil magistrate is more pressed and inculcated than in any other, is the XIIIth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans; and many a lesson of slavery hath been taught from thence. But it is evident from the context, that the apostle is speaking there of good magistrates, of those who "are ministers of God for good," of those who "are not a terror to good works but to the evil;" and what he saith of good magistrates and such as answer the end of their institution, it is surely very unfair to apply, and very absurd to think it ought to be applied, to evil magistrates and such as act contrary to the end of their institution, which is the safety and good of their people. It was the business of the apostle to give only general rules, and not to enter into the particular exceptions.

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Considering the jealousies which were entertained, of Christianity as a dangerous innovation in the state, and of the first preachers of Christianity as preachers of sedition and men (Acts XVII. 6.) "that turned the world "upside down," it became them to guard particularly against such exceptions, to recommend in an especial manner obedience to the civil powers, to teach it to others and to practise it themselves. And accordingly they did practise it, whenever it was right and lawful; but when obedience became sinful, then they refused to obey, and insisted on their rights and privileges upon several occasions.

When the rulers and council of the Jews commanded Peter and John (Acts IV. 18.) "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of "Jesus," did they acquiesce and submit to these orders? No, but they honestly and resolutely declared, that they must "obey God "rather than men." Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned unlawfully at Philippi, (Acts XVI.) and the next day the magistrates sent to set them at liberty. One might have thought this would have contented them, and they would have been glad of their liberty at any rate: But St. Paul was not so easily satisfied, and required public reparation as they had been publicly injured; "They have "beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and "now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily,"

“ rily,” says he, “ but let them come themselves, and fetch us out.” And he insisted upon it, till “ they came and besought them “ and brought them out, and desired them to “ depart out of the city.” At Jerusalem we see him again insisting on his privileges as a Roman citizen; (Acts XXII. 25.) “ And as “ they bound him with thongs, Paul said “ unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?” So that it is not contrary to the patience of a Christian, or even of an Apostle, to assert his liberty like a Roman. Again how doth he reprove the high priest Ananias (Acts XXIII. 2, 3.) for “ commanding them that stood by him to smite “ him? Sittest thou to judge me after the “ law, and commandest me to be smitten “ contrary to the law?” intimating that the law is the measure of action to those who govern as well as to those who obey.

They therefore who make Christianity an instrument of tyranny abuse it to purposes for which it was never intended; in its own nature it will have a contrary effect, will teach princes to rule as the “ ministers of God for “ good,” and subjects to obey “ not only for “ wrath but also for conscience sake.” And for our parts we may observe with gratitude, that in the kingdom where the Christian religion is professed in the greatest purity, there is the truest liberty. In no part of Christendom

dom is there such despotic power, such absolute sovereignty exercised as in the kingdoms of the East, and we know that Mohammedism generally prevails there, a religion calculated to support tyranny as it is by tyranny supported.

II. With regard to our *religious* liberties Christianity may be said to make us free in *three* respects, and all of them probably intended by our Saviour; but we will insist more particularly upon the latter, because we conceive that to be more particularly intended.

1. Christianity may be said to make us free, as it hath delivered us from the ceremonial law of the Jews; "that yoke," as St. Peter calleth it, (Acts XV. 10.) "which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear." Christians are not under "the spirit of bondage again to fear, (Rom. VIII. 15.) but "have received the spirit of adoption whereby they cry Abba Father." They are no longer *servants* but *sons*. And as this argument is much insisted on by the apostles, so particularly by St. Paul in his epistles. He is throughout a strenuous assertor of our Christian freedom, and frequently exhorts the new converts to (Gal. V. 1.) "stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free and not to be intangled again with the yoke of bondage."

2. Christianity may be said to make us free, as it delivers us from the bondage of ignorance
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and error; the whole duty of man being now more clearly understood, “and life and immortality brought to light through the gospel.” Ignorance is, as I may say, a dungeon of darkness; knowledge is a kind of enlargement of our minds, and giveth a freer scope, a freer range and compass to thought. The gospel is often compared to *light*; and it is as great a light in the moral world as the sun is in the natural. And wherever it hath shone out, or been suffered to shine out, in its native lustre, there superstition and ignorance have fled before it like mists before the morning-sun. What a spirit of Antichrist is it then that eclipseth this light, that locketh up this sacred treasure in an unknown tongue, and keepeth the people in ignorance only to keep them in devotion and obedience? (2 Cor. III. 17, 18.) “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; and we all with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.”

3. Christianity may be said to make us free, as it delivers us from the yoke and bondage of sin, from the tyranny and dominion of our lusts and passions. And this it doth principally by affording the best arguments and motives to this purpose; by chalking out the lines of duty in the plainest manner, and engaging and enabling us in the most effectual manner

manner to walk in them; by sealing to us the pardon of all past sins, and assuring us of the assistance of divine grace for the future. "Whosoever committeth sin," saith our Saviour, (John VIII. 34.) "is the servant of sin." The slave who is chained all day long to an oar, or labors digging in the mines, hath still his mind free, and his thoughts his own; but an habitual sinner is a slave both in body and soul, and much less to be pitied of the two because he is a slave of his own making. He is indeed a complete slave in all respects, for neither doth any tyrant lay such a tax upon an estate as a man's own vices; which either squander it away in luxury and extravagance, or entail a secret curse upon it that like a cankerworm wastes and consumes it. What addeth still to the misery is, that in other instances servitude is commonly imposed by our superiors, men generally serve others wiser or greater than themselves: but here our superior faculties are made subservient to our inferior, understanding giveth way to appetite, reason obeyeth passion, the heavenly and divine part of us submitteth to the earthly and brutal; which is much worse than what Solomon saith he had seen, (Eccles. X. 7.) "servants upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth." But the baseness and slavery of a life of sin, the liberty and dignity of a life of holiness will appear more if we descend more into particulars,

and

and draw some comparison, form some contrast between them.

Which conduceth more to a man's ease, more to the health of body, more to the improvement of his mind, temperance or excess? The man who is a slave to his appetite is surely one of the lowest of slaves, and is little wiser or better than the ox that fattens himself for slaughter. There is more ease and delight even in mortification and self-denial, than in surfeiting and excess; and a man's spirits are better, and he is fitter for contemplation and action after the one than after the other.—How much more doth the sober man enjoy life and enjoy himself than the drunkard? How much freer his stomach from sickness, and his head from pain? how sweet his sleep? how cool his evenings? how clear his mornings? But (Prov. XXIII. 29, 30.) “who hath woe? “who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? “who hath babblings? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They “that tarry long at the wine, they that go to “seek mixt wine.”—Is there not as much difference between living chastly and living dissolutely, as between the life of a man and the life of a beast? Is not health, reputation, credit, peace of mind the portion of the one? Is not shame, rottenness, infamy, misery the consequence of the other? “For,” as Solomon saith, (Prov. VI. 26.) “by means of a “whorish woman a man is brought to a piece
 VOL. V. I “ of

“ of bread.” (VII. 22, &c.) “ He goeth after
 “ her, till a dart strike through his liver ; For
 “ she hath cast down many wounded, yea many
 “ strong men have been slain by her ; Her
 “ house is the way to hell, going down to the
 “ chambers of death.”—The covetous man is
 a slave to Mammon, not daring to enjoy the
 wealth that he has gotten. Nay he not only
 maketh his gold his master, but his god ; and
 therefore in scripture the covetous man is call-
 ed an *idolater*. But generosity of temper is
 freedom of temper ; and as the covetous man
 maketh his gold his master, the generous man
 useth it as his servant to minister to his own
 occasions and to those of others.—Oeconomy
 and frugality are virtues of the free and inde-
 pendent, whereas luxury and extravagance in
 single persons as well as in nations are com-
 monly the forerunners of slavery. The man
 who liveth within his income liveth above the
 world ; but extravagance maketh a man ne-
 cessitous, and necessity maketh him dependent,
 so that (Prov. XXVIII. 21.) “ for a piece of
 “ bread that man will transgress.”—Is there
 not always something noble and erect in ho-
 nesty and truth, and something again mean and
 cowardly in lying and falsehood ? Is not the one
 the spirit of a free man, and the other of a
 slave ? In this sense it may properly be said,
 that “ the truth shall make us free.” Truth
 ennobles and dignifies our nature ; lies debase
 and demean it.—Whoever harbours revenge in
 his

his bosom, punisheth himself more than his adversary. There is not half that pleasure, half that glory in returning an injury as in forgiving it. If you revenge yourself upon your enemy, you are but even with him; but if you forgive him, you make yourself his superior. — Finally, which is easier and freer for a man's self as well as for others a spirit of contention, animosity, and ill-nature, or christian charity and benevolence? that is as far from thinking ill as from doing it, doeth good to all within its sphere, and wisheth well to all without it. Can there be a doubt which is the greater freedom, which is the nobler privilege and prerogative of our nature, to be like God or the devil, to carry a heaven in our breasts or a hell?

In like manner it might be instanced in every virtue and every vice, and in all and every one it would appear that the service of God is perfect freedom, but “whosoever committeth sin
“ is the servant of sin;” there is no drudgery, no slavery like guilt and wickedness. And what amends doth sin make for such laborious service? what wages doth it give? what rewards doth it promise? Why, “the wages of
“ sin is death;” shame and disgrace, remorse and despair, the dread of divine vengeance here, and everlasting misery hereafter. (Rom. VI. 23.) “The wages of sin is death; but the gift
“ of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ
“ our Lord.”

As you regard then your liberty, the ease and health of your bodies, the peace and quiet of your mind, live always a life of religion and virtue. It is in vain to promise ourselves *liberty*, as long as we are "the servants of corruption, (2 Pet. II. 19.) for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." We of this country are generally ambitious to be thought freemen, and would take it for a great indignity to be reputed slaves; let us be careful not to be slaves in the worst sense of the word; slaves to the lowest and meanest of masters, our lusts and passions; slaves in the nobler and divine part of us, our immortal souls. Be not deceived, it is not liberty to follow our appetites and passions, and to do just as our corrupt inclinations prompt and incite us. This is the liberty of a beast or a mad man, and not of an intelligent rational creature. The liberty of an intelligent rational creature is being able and free to act according to right reason, and the rightest reason is religion. There cannot be said to be liberty in a state but anarchy and usurpation, when the lowest of the people become the highest and the highest the lowest; (Is. III. 5.) "when the child behaves himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable:" And so neither can a man be said to enjoy his liberty, but to live in bondage and slavery, when the faculties which should obey, govern, and those which should

should govern, obey; when passion usurps the place of reason, and commands him as the centurion did his servant; (Matt. VIII. 9.) "Go" and he goeth, come and he cometh, do this "and he doeth it." True liberty is acting according to the truth of nature and the truth of religion. Freedom from ignorance, freedom from error; understanding to direct, and will to follow; a commanding reason, and passions obeying; this is the liberty of a rational moral agent, and this liberty is to be found only in religion. Living without rule, living without law, is not liberty but licentiousness, is not freedom but anarchy and confusion. The freest states have their laws. All creatures, animate as well as inanimate, men as well as animals, angels as well as men, are subject to law of one kind or other. Nay God himself is a law to himself as well as to all other things besides; a being as of the most perfect liberty, so of the most perfect goodness; and he would cease to be the one, if he should cease to be the other. Law therefore is so far from being inconsistent with liberty, that it is rather conducive to it and perfective of it; and Christianity is therefore with great propriety and elegance called by St. James, (I. 25.) "the perfect law of liberty."

So "perfect a law of liberty" it really is, and so much for the interest and happiness of mankind; that we may justly deny that religion, which any ways deprives us of our liber-

ties, to be the true religion. And therefore if there was none other argument against Popery (as God knoweth there are innumerable) yet the Church of Rome can never be the true Church, because she is such an enemy to liberty, forbidding the scriptures to be read in the vulgar tongue, denying the use of reason and private judgment, requiring an implicit faith in her infallibility, and persecuting, burning, and massacring those whose consciences cannot join in her communion. What! did the meek and holy Jesus come to establish a spiritual tyranny? We are free by nature, and are we to be slaves by grace? No, Christ on the contrary directs us (John V. 39.) to "search the scriptures;" requires us (Luke XII. 57.) to "judge of ourselves what is right;" commands us (Matt. XXIII. 9.) to "call no man our father upon earth, for one is our father which is in heaven;" and declares (John XIII. 35.) that "by this shall all men know that we are his disciples, if we have love one for another." This is the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Only let us take care that we abuse not this liberty into licentiousness; for that is the danger to which we seem most exposed at present, not so much to lose our Christian liberty as to abuse it. It is the apostle's advice, and with that I will conclude; (Gal. V. 13.) "Brethren ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh; but by love serve
 " one

“one another.” (1 Pet. II. 16, 17.) “As free and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciouſneſs, but as the ſervants of God; Honor all men, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.”

DISSERTATION XXVIII.

On the CHRISTIAN Sacraments.

BESIDES those things which are commanded, because they are necessary; there are others which are necessary only because they are commanded: and such for instance are the Christian Sacraments, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. It hath been made matter of objection to the Christian religion by some, that Christ should deliver any precepts besides those of pure morality; that it was below the Son of God to prescribe forms and ordinances; that it is more than we can do to discharge the moral duties, and therefore it was cruel to load us with any addition of positive institutions. Others, who may not carry the matter so high as to make it an objection to the Christian religion, may yet perhaps wonder within themselves what could be

the reasons of our Saviour's laying such a stress upon things so seemingly indifferent, as baptizing with water, eating a little bread, and drinking a little wine. In order therefore to remove the objections of those, and to satisfy the scruples of these, we will enter into the doctrine of the Christian sacraments, and endeavor as well as we can to show the reasonableness and expediency of these institutions. First such things may reasonably be enjoined if for no other end but for the trial and exercise of our obedience. But 2dly religion cannot well subsist without positive institutions, there never was any religion in the world without some, and those of the Christian religion are few in number and not in the least burdensome. And 3dly there was a proper occasion for introducing them into the Christian religion, and they are apt representations of what they were designed to represent. 4thly Though the things are indifferent in themselves, yet they are highly moral, highly religious in their ends and uses. And 5thly the benefits annexed to them are not annexed to the bare reception of them, but to the devout and worthy reception.

1st. Such things may reasonably be enjoined if for no other end but for the trial and exercise of our obedience. As God gave us being at first, and still continues us in it; as we are the workmanship of his hands, and all that we are and all that we have are owing to his bounty; he hath an absolute right to our obedience,

and in the fullest sense of the words he is our *lord* and we are his *servants*. Having therefore an absolute right to our obedience, he may exercise this obedience in what instances he shall think proper; and his commanding a thing for no other reason but to exercise our obedience is reason sufficient for commanding it. It is true we obey God in obeying the moral commands; but in moral duties besides the will and command of God to oblige us, there are the nature and reason of things to engage our obedience; whereas in positive institutions we cannot so readily apprehend the reason of the thing, and obey only because we are commanded. Our obligation to the former is double, both because they are good and because they are commanded; our obligation to the latter is only because they are commanded. The former are commanded because they are good; the latter are only good because they are commanded. Our performance therefore of the latter is an act of more pure obedience. It is possible, a man may be a moral man without being religious; but obedience to positive institutions is pure obedience: and God may reasonably injoin them if for no other reason but to exercise this obedience. We are obliged to the duties of morality, as men with only the light of nature and reason to direct us; as Christians blessed with the additional light of revelation and the gospel, something more is required of us. The sacraments are marks and
badges

badges to distinguish us as Christians: and (John III. 5.) "except we be born of water and of the Spirit, we cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" (VI. 53.) "except we eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, we have no life in us."

2dly. Religion cannot well subsist without positive institutions; there never was any religion in the world without some, and those of the Christian religion are few in number and not in the least burdensome. As man is a compound of soul and body, his worship should be neither all external nor all internal, but be like himself in one part bodily, in one part spiritual; and consequently there should be rules to regulate the one as well as the other. Moreover as man is not only an individual but likewise a member of society, his worship should be public as well as private; and consequently times and places, and forms of worship must be appointed. Religion therefore cannot well subsist without positive institutions; they are like fences which being broken down or taken away the inclosure becomes common; they are like cloaths no part of the body indeed but they keep the body warm, and are both its ornament and defense.

In fact too there never was any religion in the world without some positive institutions or other, whether true or false, whether ancient or modern, Heathen or Mohammedan, Jewish or Christian; a strong presumption that no religion

ligion can ever subsist without them, since none ever did; and that all lawgivers have thought them necessary, since all have enjoined them. Not only the false religions, I say, those of human invention, but likewise the true religions those of divine origin and extraction have all had their positive institutions. The Jewish religion abounds with them; and before the law was circumcision, before the flood were sacrifices, and even in paradise man was not without a positive institution and command not to eat of the forbidden fruit. And why then should it seem strange or unaccountable that the Christian religion is not altogether without positive institutions?

Those of the Christian religion are few in number, and not in the least burdensome. The general rule is, (1 Cor. XIV. 40.) "Let all things be done decently and in order," leaving it to men to determine in their several ages and countries what is decent and orderly. The only particular institutions are the two sacraments: And what can be easier than these? the one to initiate us into the Christian religion; the other to profess our continuance in the same: by the one we are admitted into the Church of Christ; by the other we live in communion with it: by the one we make a solemn vow and covenant to live as becomes Christians; and by the other we repeat and renew that vow and covenant. As Annibal was by his father sworn at the altar a mortal

foe to Rome, so we should at the altar likewise become sworn enemies to all manner of sin and wickedness. Here are no costly sacrifices, here are no painful operations ; and how can we refuse to pay the tribute of such easy obedience ? One may properly apply in this case the words spoken to Naaman the Syrian, (2 Kings V. 13.) “ If the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it ? ” how much rather then when he saith to thee “ Wash and be clean,” be baptized and receive the holy sacrament of the body and blood of Christ ?

3dly. There was a proper occasion for introducing the sacraments into the Christian religion, and they are apt representations of what they were designed to represent. It is certain, our blessed Lord might have instituted what rites and ceremonies he pleased ; but he graciously condescends to the prejudices of mankind, and chooses to adopt some received usages and customs rather than institute any thing new of his own. Now it is well known that washings and purifications were no small part of the religion of the ancient Heathens ; and among the Jews it was usual to admit their proselytes by baptism, which ceremony had been made still more familiar to them by the practice of John the Baptist. It is well known too, that bread and wine were in use among all nations in their religious worship ; and it was no very great change to substitute the Lord’s supper in
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the room of the Paschal supper, especially as it had been the custom with the Jews to eat bread and drink wine in an eucharistical way long before our Saviour's time. Now here I say was a proper occasion for introducing the sacraments into the Christian religion; neither could the professors of any religion object to them, because all religions had the same ceremonies or something like the same.

They are likewise apt representations of what they were designed to represent. Water is a natural emblem of purity, and the washing or baptizing with water of the washing and cleansing us from our sins. The bread broken is a lively emblem of Christ's body broken for us, and so is the wine poured out of his blood shed for the remission of sins. And these though they are such significant, yet at the same time are such plain symbols, as one would think were incapable of ever being applied to superstition and idolatry. Images, pictures, relics, and such like memorials have frequently proved the occasions of the weakest superstitions and of the grossest idolatries; but who would ever imagin it possible for such plain elements as water and bread and wine to be abused to such purposes? It is true the Church of Rome notwithstanding hath so abused them; but the abuse is therefore the more notorious, their folly the more palpable, the greater their guilt and the heavier their condemnation.

4thly. Though the things are indifferent in themselves, yet they are highly moral, highly religious in their ends and uses. The end of baptism, or the thing signified by baptism, is (as our Church Catechism expresseth it) a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness. As our bodies are washed with water; so our souls should be washed and purified by the blood of Christ: As we are baptized and buried in water, and rise again as it were out of it; so we should die and be buried to sin, and rise again as it were to newness of life. "Know ye not," saith the apostle, (Rom. VI. 3, 4.) "that so many of us as
 " were baptized into Jesus Christ, were bap-
 " tized into his death? Therefore we are bu-
 " ried with him by baptism into death, that
 " like as Christ was raised up from the dead
 " by the glory of the Father, even so we also
 " should walk in newness of life." These expressions allude to the ancient method of baptizing which was by immersion or dipping the whole body in water, the method used at present (and especially in these colder climates) is only sprinkling with water, the word baptism signifying both the one and the other: but the moral obligation is the same, and the inward effect is the same, however the outward ceremony be performed.

The ends and uses of the Lord's supper are two according to scripture; the principal one to commemorate the death of Christ, (1 Cor.

XI. 24, 26.) " This do in remembrance of
" me ;" and " As often as ye eat this bread
" and drink this cup ye do show the Lord's
" death till he come : " the other to testify our
communion with Christ as the head, and with
one another as the members, which argument
St. Paul pursues at large in the Xth and XIth
Chapters of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians.
Vain men may imagin more ends and uses ;
but Christ and his apostles, who should cer-
tainly know best, mention only these two.
And these two are sufficient ; the one expess-
ing our gratitude to God and Christ, and the
other testifying our love to the brethren ; the
one an act of thanksgiving, and the other an
act of charity. And thus it appears that the
sacraments, though they are not strictly speak-
ing moral duties, yet are great helps to
morality.

5thly and lastly. The benefits annexed to
them are not annexed to the bare reception of
them, but to the devout and worthy recep-
tion. Whatever God commands, he annexes
always his grace and blessing to the perform-
ance. He hath instituted the sacraments,
and consequently his blessing attends the sa-
craments ; not that we must imagin the sacra-
mental elements can of themselves convey the
blessing of God ; but certainly if he pleases
God may make them the instruments of con-
veying it : as the waters of Jordan had not
in themselves the virtue to cure Naaman's le-
prosy,

profy, but were made so medicinal by the divine appointment. It is to be feared that several Christians use the sacraments only in the nature of charms, content themselves with the *opus operatum*; and so they are but baptized and now and then communicate, reckon that a world of graces and benefits are conferred upon them. But the baptism that saveth us, as St. Peter speaketh, (1 Pet. III. 21.) is not the bare outward ceremony "the putting away the filth of the flesh," but the inward moral qualification "the answer of a good conscience towards God." And of the Lord's supper it is said expressly, (1 Cor. XI. 29.) "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation," that is some temporal judgment, "to himself." The qualifications requisite for the worthy reception of the Lord's supper are repentance, faith, and charity; to repent truly of our sins past, and effectually to resolve against the like for the future; to have a lively and stedfast faith in Christ our Saviour, with a thankful remembrance of his death and passion; and to be in perfect charity with all men, forgiving others as we wish and expect to be forgiven ourselves: so shall we be meet partakers of this holy communion, and be filled with God's grace and heavenly benediction. A good life is the best preparation for this as well as for all other religious offices; and if with a good conscience we can

repeat

repeat the Lord's prayer, we may with a good conscience also receive the Lord's supper. In a word what St. Paul saith of circumcision is very applicable to the Christian sacraments: (Rom. II. 25.) "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision:" And so the Sacraments verily profit, if thou obey the gospel; but if thou obey not the gospel, thy baptism is made no baptism, thy communion no communion.

After all our blessed Saviour, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, (Col. II. 3.) might have infinitely wiser and better reasons than these for the institution of the sacraments: but yet these I hope are sufficient to show us the reasonableness and expediency of them, and at the same time may reprove the folly and wickedness of those, who take from them as the Quakers and some Sectaries do on the one hand, or add to them as the Romanists do on the other. The former reduce the sacraments to figure and allegory; but certainly if the passages relating to them are not to be understood literally, there is nothing to be understood literally in the whole scripture; if what is said of them is figure and allegory, all is figure and allegory. The latter increase the number of the sacraments to seven; but there was no mention of seven sacraments before Peter Lom-

bard a writer in the twelfth century, and with as much reason and with as good authority as they make them *seven* they may make them *seventy times seven*. What Christ hath instituted, that we should religiously observe, neither diminishing ought from it nor adding to it; and to do either the one or the other is as I may say high treason against the sovereignty of God; this in the Church is much such an offense to the divine majesty as clipping and coining to the king's majesty in the state.

Those who object to positive institutions generally pretend to be great patrons of morality: but is any thing a greater part of morality than to obey God in whatever he shall please to command? And let us not vainly imagin, that we could devise other rites and ceremonies which might do as well or better than these; for this would be like Naaman, to whose story we have more than once alluded in this discourse already, as it is very applicable to the case before us. (2 Kings V.) Naaman was a leper, as all we are sinners. For the cure of his leprosy he was ordered by the prophet to wash seven times in the river Jordan; and for the remedy of our sins we are commanded by Christ to be baptized with the baptism of repentance, and to celebrate the holy Eucharist. Vain men may object to these commands of our Saviour, as Naaman did to the prophet's; and fondly think that other institutions might do better, as he did that other waters would sooner

sooner cure his leprosy; "Are not Abana and
"Pharpar rivers of Damascus better than all
"the waters of Israel? May I not wash in
"them and be clean? So he turned and went
"away in a rage." But doth it become us
to dispute the divine commands or to obey
them? "If the prophet had bid thee do some
"great thing," If Christ had bid thee do
some great thing, "wouldst thou not have
"done it? how much rather then when he
"saith to thee Wash and be clean?" Naaman
obeyed the prophet's command, and was cured
of his leprosy; and let us duly obey our Sa-
viour's commands, and we shall find peace
to our souls, pardon for the past and grace for
the future.

The sacrament of baptism indeed being the
ceremony of initiation into the Christian reli-
gion, is to be performed *once* only; but the
sacrament of the Lord's supper being a solemn
commemoration of the death of Christ and a
communion with Christians, it is greatly to
be wished that with the service a little abbre-
viated it was made part of our *daily* worship,
as it was in the purer and better times of
Christianity, or at least that it was to be cele-
brated *every Sunday*, for "as often as we eat
"this bread and drink this cup we do shew
"the Lord's death till he come." But since
the manners of the age will not easily allow of
this, let us not fail to communicate however
as often as we have opportunity, and not ima-

gin that receiving once or twice in a year, and much less that conforming only for a place will be sufficient. They must be nominal only and not real Christians, who can turn their backs upon their Lord's table, and flight so distinguishing and essential a part of Christian worship. The request of a dying friend hath great weight with every person of the least humanity; and shall we be guilty of such monstrous ingratitude as to neglect the commands of our dying Saviour? (John XV. 13, 14.) "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends; "Ye are my friends," saith he, "if ye do "whatsoever I command you."

DISSERTATION XXIX.

On the INFIDELITY of the JEWS.

NEVER was greater love shown to mankind than in God's sending his only-begotten Son into the world, and never was love so ill received, so ill requited. Never was more undeserved kindness on one side, and never more foul ingratitude on the other. The Son of God cometh to his chosen people
as

as their saviour and their king, and they condemn him, as a rebel and a slave: He proffers them glory and immortality, and they brand him with ignominy and death. Even they, (Rom. IX. 4, 5.) “to whom pertained the
“ adoption and the glory, and the covenants,
“ and the giving of the law, and the service
“ of God, and the promises, whose are the
“ fathers, and of whom as concerning the
“ flesh Christ came,” they were the most forward to reject him, they were the first springs and authors of all his sufferings. Who were furnished with the means and opportunities of knowing him most, they regarded him least: who were most capable of discerning his divine person and character, they treated him as the worst of impostors and malefactors, they reviled him, they scourged him, they crucified him. Nor did their malice rest here. They not only oppressed him living, but traduced his memory when he was dead: they not only abused him in his own person, but still farther persecuted him in his disciples and followers. And even at this day, however distressed, however dispersed over the face of the whole earth, yet they all join heartily in rejecting and opposing the gospel of Christ, in firm adherence to the Old Testament, and in utter aversion from the New. They look upon the Christians as a most profane set of men, they stile us heretics and apostates, and in

their (1) synagogues they pray for our ruin and extirpation.

This may appear somewhat strange and surprising upon a slight and superficial view of the matter, and may seem to reflect on the certainty and evidence of the Christian religion; and therefore it will be proper, for our satisfaction in this point, to inquire particularly, 1st, What are the *causes* of this infidelity of the Jews? and 2dly, What *ends* and *purposes* of divine providence are served and answered by it?

Our first inquiry is into the *causes* of the infidelity of the Jews. It is certain the Jews and religious proselytes were converted to Christianity at first in great numbers; which plainly showed that the Christian religion was not destitute of proof or truth, and that it was not owing to want of evidence that men rejected it, but to some other reasons, such evidently as these which follow.

The Jews were a very wicked and sinful people, and no wonder, that such men should not embrace a religion so contrary to the desires and inclinations of flesh and blood. Our Saviour frequently calleth them an *evil* and *adulterous* generation, a generation of *vipers* and *serpents*: and their case must be very bad indeed, which could extort such hard and opprobrious names from him who was meekness itself. But take an account of them in the

(1) See the prayers composed by R. Gamaliel.

words of their own historian and a priest of Jerusalem. In his 5th book of the wars of the Jews, Josephus saith, that ‘ They not
‘ only trampled upon all that was sacred
‘ among men, but jested with divinity itself,
‘ and made no more account of the oracles of
‘ the prophets than of so many dreams and
‘ fables.’ Again in his 6th Book. ‘ It would
‘ be endless to run through the history of
‘ their iniquities; but to comprise all in little, I am verily persuaded there never was
‘ so miserable a city, nor so barbarous a people upon the face of the earth.’ Again in the conclusion of the same book; ‘ My
‘ heart is full and I cannot forbear giving it
‘ vent, I am persuaded, that if the Romans
‘ had delayed calling these wicked people to
‘ an account, this city would have been drowned or swallowed by an earthquake, or have
‘ been demolished by thunder and lightning
‘ like Sodom, the Jews being a more wicked
‘ and atheistical people than the Sodomites
‘ themselves.’ And now what wonder is it that the gospel should meet with no better reception among such monsters of iniquity? How could the voluptuous Sadducee digest the doctrines of mortification and self-denial, of taking up his cross and following the captain of his salvation through sufferings? How could the proud and haughty Pharisee condescend to be meek and lowly, and from worshipping God in show learn to worship him in

spirit and in truth? What methods could be taken to win those, who were resolved to quarrel with every body, would not be pleased with one thing or another, would neither (Matt. XI. 17, &c.) “dance” with the “pipers” nor “mourn” with the “mourners,” found fault with the solitary and austere John as “having a devil,” with the humane and sociable Jesus as being a “glutton” and a “wine-bibber?” What reason could prevail on them, who were never in temper to hear reason, who were always cloudy and sullen, self-willed and obstinate, and were as St. Paul said of himself (Acts XXVI. 11.) “exceedingly mad” against those who differed from them? What more could be done for them, who had withstood the last, the utmost means of conviction, and had rendered themselves incapable of mercy by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, by ascribing the miracles plainly wrought by the power of God to the power of the devil? “No man can come to me,” saith our blessed Lord (John VI. 44.) “except the Father which hath sent me draw him:” No man can embrace the Christian religion without the help of divine grace, and divine grace is justly withheld from those who have made themselves unworthy of it. In a word, a judicial infatuation had seized the Jews, their eyes were so blinded and their hearts so hardened, that they could not (John XII. 40.) “see with their eyes and under-
“ stand

“ stand with their hearts, and be converted
“ and healed.”

Some even among the chief rulers believed on Christ, who yet were ashamed to make open profession of him, and, like Nicodemus, came to their master privately and by night. And to be sure, the common people would not pretend to be wiser than their teachers. They would not be forward to take upon them a new religion, which they imagined none of their betters had espoused before them. “ Have any of the rulers or of the pharisees
“ believed on him ?” (John VIII. 48.) was a powerful argument among those, who were influenced by great names and led blindfold by reverend authority.

There likewise arose many false Christs and false prophets about the time of our Saviour, and drew away much people after them. And even they, who were too wise to lend an ear to these impostors, would yet, many of them, grow unreasonably suspicious, and mislead themselves for very fear of being misled by others. Seeing so many cheats abroad they would be apt to look upon all men as cheats, and reject the true Messiah among so many false ones.

The Jews had also entertained unreasonable prejudices against our Saviour, and were offended at the meanness of his life and ignominy of his death. The prophets had made use of the loftiest images to set forth the glories
of

of the Messiah, and in describing his spiritual kingdom had borrowed their metaphors from the kingdoms of men. What was thus spoken figuratively, the doctors of the Jews had expounded literally; and these traditionary expositions being handed down from generation to generation bred in the Jews a notion of a mighty temporal prince; a notion highly pleasing, no doubt, to a people whose affairs were in the decline, and whose polity seemed to be tending toward a dissolution. Big with this expectation the Jews knew not Jesus for their Messiah, nor discerned the brightness of his glory through the cloud which an humble fortune had cast over him. They looked for a prince of they knew not what high extraction; but as for Jesus they took it for granted that he was the *carpenter's son*. They had learned from their prophets that Bethlechem was to be the place of their Messiah's nativity, but Jesus living at Nazareth they hastily concluded that there too he was born, and that "no good thing could come out of Galilee." They were pleasing themselves with gaudy dreams of greatness, with the prospect of conquest and empire; but he declared that "his kingdom was not of this world," and accordingly he taught them not how to shake off the Roman yoke, but how to free themselves from the greater yoke and tyranny of sin, not how to triumph over foreign enemies, but how to subdue their domestic adversaries, their
lusts

lusts and vices. They hoped to enjoy certain rights and privileges above the rest of mankind; but he came to break down the wall of partition, and to unite Jews and Gentiles as one body under one head. They expected to become lords of the nations and to have Jerusalem their seat of empire; and were shocked to hear that their city and temple would be destroyed, and that "all who live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution." At last when they saw him die an ignominious death, that very thing was enough to cancel all his miracles, and to convince them that he could not be their Messiah, little considering that he was "the lamb of God," which was thus "to take away the sin of the world."

These I take to have been the principal *causes* of the infidelity of the Jews at first. Nor is it difficult to conceive what may be the reasons of their persisting in the same infidelity now. On the part of the Jews there is something contributes to it, and something again on the part of the world. On the part of the Jews, most of the same, if not all the same reasons, which gave birth to their infidelity, nourish it, their wickedness, their avarice, their pride, their obstinacy, the false Christs and false prophets who ever and anon have risen among them, and their vain hopes and expectations of worldly greatness; and besides these their malice and uncharitableness against the Christians, their living as it were within an inclosure, their

their eating and drinking and marrying all among themselves, which seclude them from the most agreeable intercourses of human life, and make their conversion more difficult to be compassed. On the part of the world the grand obstacles to the conversion of the Jews are the prevalence of Mohammedism and other false religions, the heresies and schisms of Christians, their wicked lives so contrary to their most holy profession, and in particular the corruptions and idolatry of the Church of Rome, and the severities she exercises upon the Jews, cruelties and exactions which are of far more force to deter men from Christianity than invite them to the profession of it. And to all this let me add, that we are not ardent and affectionate enough in our requests to the throne of grace for their conversion. We do not with St. Paul (Rom. X. 1.) make it our " hearty " desire and prayer to God, that Israel may be " saved."

Thus have we seen some account of the rise and continuance of the infidelity of the Jews, and therefore we ought in reason to be the less surprised and offended at it. It remains that we should inquire, as we proposed, in the second place, What *ends* and *purposes* of divine providence are served and answered by it? These without doubt are great and many, but the greatest perhaps we can discover are these following.

By

By the infidelity of the Jews we gain a great number of unsuspected witnesses to the truth of the Old Testament, and by their dispersion these witnesses abound in the richest and most trading parts of the world. Had the body of the Jews been converted to Christianity, they might have been supposed to conspire with the Christians in forging and corrupting the prophecies relating to the Messiah: but now their infidelity cutteth off all cavils and suspicions of that kind, and maketh their testimony, like that of sworn enemies, the more favorable the more unquestionable. We desire them only to stand to their own evidence, and by their own confession they shall be tried and condemned.

Again. By the infidelity of the Jews and their dispersion consequent of it are remarkably fulfilled many predictions of Moses and the prophets, of Christ and his apostles; so that instead of doing disservice to the Christian cause it doeth it real honor, and tendeth wonderfully to promote and advance it in the world. And after all the changes and revolutions, after all the persecutions and massacres which they have seen and undergone these 1700 years, they still subsist a distinct people in order to the completion of other prophecies, that (Rom. XI. 25, 26.) “when the fulness of the Gentiles is come in, all Israel may be saved.” There is nothing parallel to this to be found in history from the creation of the world down to this time, and it is no less than a standing miracle in

in all ages and countries for the truth of the Christian religion.

Besides it is a great advantage to the Christian religion to have been first preached and propagated in a nation of unbelievers, as it freeth the account of the facts from all suspicion of fraud and imposture. Designing men may easily be supposed to carry on a trick among their creatures and dependents, among those of the same side and party, of the same profession and interest; but how was it possible for a parcel of poor illiterate fishermen and tent-makers to succeed in an attempt of this nature among thousands of secret spies and open enemies? Nothing but truth, nothing but divine truth, and upheld by a divine power, could have stood the trial and borne down so much malice and opposition before it.

Another advantage arising from the infidelity of the Jews is, that it occasions the books of the Old Testament to be more studied, than perhaps they would otherwise be. Whenever the Jews become converts to Christianity, they must be won chiefly by arguments derived from the law and the prophets; and surely it is necessary that we should in some measure understand the law and the prophets, before we can reason justly, and draw legitimate conclusions from them. As it is, the prophetic writings are the most obscure parts of holy scripture, little enough read and less understood; and they would have lain still more neglected, and
buried

buried in far greater obscurity, had not the controversies with the Jews kept our diligence waking, and necessitated us now and then to search into their force and meaning.

This may farther serve to show (what is often asserted in holy writ) that God did not choose the Jews from among the nations for their own sakes. Indeed they have been from first to last a stubborn and wayward sort of people; but a greater instance of their obstinacy and perverseness we can no where find than in their rejecting and crucifying the Lord of glory. When their law was obligatory and in full force, then they were always falling off from it: and now they religiously adhere to it, when it is repealed and void. When they were in possession of the promised land and lived within sight of their temple, then they frequently revolted to the idolatry of the Heathen nations: but now when they are dispersed in all countries and it is impossible to perform their temple-service, they are become the greatest bigots to their religion and express the strongest zeal and affection for it. A memorable instance, how much prosperity can soften, and adversity harden the minds of a people!

This may also serve as a warning to us to beware of the same infidelity, “for if God
“spared not the natural branches, take heed
“lest he also spare not thee; because of un-
“belief they were broken off and thou standest
“by faith, be not high-minded, but fear.”

The Jews and Gentiles all contribute to the glory of God, the former as monuments of his severity, the latter of his goodness. The Jews fell and were cast away, that the Gentiles might be received; and the Gentiles were received, that the Jews might be provoked to emulation. The Gentiles were aliens from the true religion before the coming of Christ, and the Jews have been strangers and aliens ever since; so that God has concluded all, one time or other, in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. These are the uses to which this doctrine is applied by St. Paul, as may be seen at large in the XIth Chapter of his Epistle to the Romans.

Moreover, by this one instance we are plainly taught, that it is not being of this nation or that Church that saveth a man, but in every nation in every Church (Acts X. 35.) “he
“ that feareth God and worketh righteousness
“ is accepted with him.”

Finally, the case of the Jews may be useful in correcting a vain opinion which every one almost is sometimes apt to entertain, That had he lived in the times of our Saviour and conversed with him personally, had he been an ear-witness to his words an eye-witness to his works, he should have been a better Christian, he should have resigned all his scruples, and have believed and obeyed without doubt and without reserve. Alas! they, who are infidels now, would in all probability have been infidels

dels then. The Jews saw the miracles of our blessed Lord, and yet believed not; (John XX. 29.) "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed."

After all we may conclude our discourse upon this head, as St. Paul doth upon the same subject: (Rom. XI. 33, &c.) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? or who hath first given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things, to whom be glory for ever! Amen."

DISSERTATION XXX.

On the Sufferings of CHRIST.

NO man ever suffered so much as the best man that ever was in the world, the man Christ Jesus. His whole life from beginning to end was one continued scene of doing good and suffering evil. His first breath was drawn in a stable, and his last was expired

on a cross : he lived in poverty and want, and died in misery and shame. (Matt. VIII. 20.)

“ The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.” In his body he was weary, and hungry, and thirsty, weeping now, and now sweating as it were great drops of blood : In his soul he had a quick sensation of evils present, and a lively apprehension of evils to come, and as he himself expresseth it, (Matt. XXVI. 38.) “ was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.” He was persecuted by his enemies, despised by his kinsmen, betrayed and sold by one of his disciples, and deserted by them all : he was made the jest and derision of all sorts of people from princes and chief-priests down to soldiers and slaves ; he was spit upon, he was buffeted, he was scourged, and to complete all he was crucified, crucified as a malefactor and a rebel. So that he might cry out in the language of the prophet, (Lam. I. 12.) “ Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.”

Uncommon as these sufferings were, instead of engaging the pity and compassion of all, they have by many been treated with scorn and contempt, and have been made matter of objection to Christ and the Christian religion. The sufferings of Christ were (1 Cor. I. 23.) “ to the Jews a stumbling-block and to the
“ Greeks

“ Greeks foolishness; a stumbling-block to
“ the Jews,” who expected a mighty temporal
prince and deliverer, to free their country from
a foreign yoke and raise them to the empire of
the world; and “ foolishness to the Greeks,”
who were full of their own philosophy and
wisdom, and thought it very absurd, that so
mean a person should come vested with the
authority of a prophet, and that life and im-
mortality should be preached in his name, who
had suffered and died as the worst of malefac-
tors. Some perhaps too among ourselves may
entertain the meaner opinion of our Saviour’s
doctrin on account of the meanness of his con-
dition. They may think it below his dignity,
if he was really the Son of God, to suffer so
much, and below their own dignity too, to
pin their faith on one, who was (Acts V. 30.)
“ slain and hanged on a tree.”

But whatever men may conceive of this me-
thod of effecting our salvation, the scripture in
many places emphatically stileth it “ the wis-
dom of God :” as in the Epistle to the Ephe-
sians (I. 6, 7, 8.) “ To the praise of the
“ glory of his grace, wherein he hath made
“ us accepted in the Beloved; In whom we
“ have redemption through his blood, the for-
“ giveness of sins, according to the riches
“ of his grace, Wherein he hath abounded to-
“ wards us in all wisdom and prudence :” and
again (III. 10, 11.) “ To the intent that now
“ unto the principalities and powers in hea-
L 2 “ venly

“venly places might be known by the church
 “the manifold wisdom of God, According
 “to the eternal purpose which he purposed in
 “Christ Jesus our Lord :” And (Luke XXIV.
 26.) we have our Saviour himself speaking not
 only as if it was proper, but also as if it was
 in a manner necessary. “Ought not Christ to
 “have suffered these things?” And besides
 those which an all-wise God might have to
 himself, there are several reasons for the suf-
 ferings of Jesus Christ, which lie level even to
 our low understandings.

I. Jesus Christ suffered, because it was fore-
 told that the Messiah should suffer. “Thus
 “it was written,” (Luke XXIV. 46.)—and
 therefore “thus it behoved Christ to suffer.”
 Here it is to be wished, that we had St. Paul’s
 discourses to the Thessalonians, (Acts XVII.
 2, 3.) “wherein he reasoned with them three
 “sabbath days out of the scriptures, opening
 “and alleging that Christ must needs have
 “suffered.” If we seek for *types* of this, we
 have Isaac and Joseph, the brazen serpent and
 the paschal lamb; if we seek for *express pro-*
phesies, we have the whole XXIIId Psalm, and
 the whole LIIIId chapter of Isaiah.

The sufferings of Christ are drawn not only
 in general terms, but the particular circum-
 stances also are delineated and described. Was
 Jesus betrayed by one of his disciples who par-
 took with him in his last supper? David speak-
 eth as in the person of the Messiah, (Psal. XLI.

9.) "Yea mine own familiar friend in whom
"I trusted, who did eat of my bread, hath
"lift up his heel against me." Was Jesus
sold to the chief priests for 30 pieces of silver?
The very same sum is specified by the prophet
Zechariah for the price of the Messiah, (Zech.
XI. 12.) "they weighed for my price 30 pieces
"of silver." Did the Jews scourge Jesus, and
buffet him, and spit on his face? The prophet
Isaiah personating the Messiah declares, (Is. L.
6.) "I gave my back to the smiters, and my
"cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; I
"hid not my face from shame and spitting."
Was Jesus affixed to the cross by nails which
pierced through his hands and his feet? David
in the person of the Messiah complains (Psal.
XXII. 16.) "They pierced my hands and my
"feet." Was Jesus crucified between two
thieves one on the right hand and the other on
the left? The Messiah, as the prophet Isaiah
informs us, (Is. LIII. 12.) was to be "num-
"bered with the transgressors." Did the Jews
give Jesus vinegar to drink mingled with gall?
David again personates the Messiah and com-
plains, (Psal. LXIX. 21.) "They gave me
"gall for my meat and in my thirst they gave
"me vinegar to drink." Several other cir-
cumstances (the piercing of his side by a spear,
the not breaking his bones with those of the
other malefactors, the parting of his garments
and the casting of lots for his vesture) were as
particularly foretold, and as particularly ful-

filled: and the prophet Daniel (Dan. IX. 26.) pointeth out the time, when Messiah the prince should be cut off, and accordingly our Jesus was cut off at that very time. And thus, as St. Peter speaketh, (Acts III. 18.) "Those things which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled." Jesus himself frequently told his disciples how many things he should suffer, so that his sufferings were requisite as well to verify his own words as to fulfil the ancient prophecies. With them it is possible he may be the Messiah, but it is absolutely impossible he should be the Messiah without them.

II. Another reason for the sufferings of Jesus Christ was, that he might the better accomplish the great work of our salvation. It was requisite for him to suffer, because he was in the place and stead of us who had deserved to suffer. We were sinners, and therefore he suffered as a sinner; we were malefactors, and therefore he died as a malefactor, for (Is. LIII. 6.) "God laid on him the iniquities of us all." It was requisite for him to suffer, that he might (Gal. III. 13.) "redeem us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us," that he might (Heb. IX. 26.) "put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and that (II. 14.) "through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." It was requisite for him
to

to suffer, that he might (Ibid. 17, 18.) " be
" a merciful and faithful high-priest, for in
" that he himself hath suffered being tempt-
" ed, he is able to succur them that are
" tempted." It was requisite for him to suf-
fer, that he might purchase glory for himself
as the head, and for us as the members. (Psal.
CX. 7.) " He hath drunk of the brook in the
" way, therefore hath he lift up his head."
(Luke XXIV. 26.) " Ought not Christ to
" have suffered these things, and to enter into
" his glory?" (Heb. II. 10.) " It became
" him, for whom are all things and by whom
" are all things, in bringing many sons unto
" glory, to make the captain of their salvation
" perfect through sufferings."

Indeed I do not pretend to say that God could
not save mankind by any other method than by
the sufferings and death of Jesus Christ; for
what is impotent ignorant man that he should
prescribe to God, and set bounds to infinite
power and wisdom? but certainly the greater
were our Saviour's sufferings in the flesh, the
more was manifested his love towards us, the
more the honor of the divine laws was vindi-
cated, and the more was expressed God's hatred
and abhorrence of sin. Before men presume
to find fault with the sufferings of Christ, let
them devise any better means at once to satisfy
infinite justice and display infinite mercy, at
once to express the greatest love to sinners and
the greatest hatred to sin. (Psal. XCII. 5.)

"O Lord how great are thy works! thy thoughts are very deep!"

III. A third reason for the sufferings of Jesus Christ was, that he might more fully evince the truth and divinity of the Christian religion. Had not Jesus appeared in this low and mean condition, had He taken upon him the form of a king instead of the form of a servant, it might have given men some reason to suspect, that his views were not spiritual but temporal, not to save others but aggrandize himself, and that though he professed to do all for the glory of God, yet he really intended his own glory: but now how could Jesus, or any man, prove his sincerity more than by refusing the people when they would have made him king, (John VI. 15.) and not only so but by undergoing the greatest sufferings and at last laying down life itself,

As the sufferings of Jesus prove his own sincerity, so likewise the sincerity of his followers. Had Jesus been born a great temporal prince, and lived in worldly pomp and majesty, he would have dazzled the eyes of men and have gained more followers indeed, but what followers? a train of courtly hypocrits and servile flatterers: but now how could Jesus prove the sincerity of his followers more than by suffering himself and declaring to them that they too must suffer in like manner? And this, I suppose, was the reason, that first tempted Judas to betray him. It is probable Judas would

would have been as firmly attached to his master as any disciple of them all, had his master had any places and preferments of honor and profit to confer upon him; but finding his master's kingdom was not of this world and being too himself fond of money he staggered in his allegiance, and since he was likely to get nothing by faithfully adhering to his master, he was induced to try the other expedient, and see what he could get by treacherously betraying and selling him.

To these considerations let me add, the greater was the weakness of Jesus, the more was the strength of God made perfect in his weakness; the less his natural abilities, the more opportunities he had of displaying his supernatural powers. He was a man of no learning and education, and therefore it was the more wonderful for him to have "that wisdom and speak as never man spake." He had not wherewithal to supply the necessities of those who followed him, and therefore he fed five thousand men beside women and children with five loaves and two fishes, and at last when all were satisfied there remained more provision than there was at first. He was poor and had not wherewithal to pay tribute, and therefore a piece of money was miraculously provided in a fish's mouth for himself and for Peter. He was in agony in the garden, and therefore there appeared unto him "an angel from heaven strengthening him." He was crucified,

crucified, and therefore all nature mourned as it were at his departure. The sun was darkened, the earth shook, the rocks rent and the dead arose. And thus his wants and his sufferings served the more to display his divine power, as well as proved his own sincerity and the sincerity of his followers, and by these means, as I said before, more fully evince the truth and divinity of the Christian religion.

IV. A fourth and the last reason I shall mention for the sufferings of Jesus Christ was, that he might set the better and more familiar example of virtue. Had Jesus lived at ease and abounded with the good things of life, half his virtues would have lain concealed for want of proper opportunities to exert them. He could not then have exercised and displayed to so much advantage that wonderful serenity and chearfulness of temper, that condescending meekness and patience, that heroical magnanimity and forgiveness, in all things that entire submission and resignation to the will of his Father: But now how much greater doth He appear in his sufferings than the greatest prince in his successes and triumphs, how has he confounded the little pride and pageantry of the world, and evinced that true greatness consists not in greatness of fortune but in greatness of soul? how experimentally has he proved, that a man may be innocent and yet afflicted, and afflicted and yet innocent? how instructively has he taught us not
only

only how to live, but also (what is harder) how to die?

It is no wonder for a man to be easy himself, when his circumstances are easy; the trials of patience, the touchstones of virtue are afflictions, are necessities, are reproaches, are persecutions and sufferings, tortures and death. And without doubt, the heavier the burden, the more excellent the virtue that patiently beareth it; the more and oftner the metal is tried in the fire, the finer and more precious that, which loseth nothing of its weight and cometh out again without any diminution. But it may be asked, Are there not virtues proper to those who move in a high sphere, as well as to those who move in a low one? Without doubt there are, but what virtues could Jesus have displayed in a high station, which he hath not displayed in his mean one? and certain it is, in his mean station he hath exerted several virtues, which he could not possibly have exerted in a high one. The virtues of high and low, of rich and poor were in him all united, and exercised together in the greatest perfection. Besides a character in low condition is more familiar and imitable by greater numbers, for princes and great men are few in comparison with the bulk of mankind, and Christians in particular were to follow "the captain of their salvation" through sufferings, and "through much tribulation were" "to enter into the kingdom of God."

Neither would our Saviour's doctrine have been of that use and authority, had not he himself condescended to put it into practice, and enforced it by his own example. A man living at ease and flowing with wealth, whose every want is supplied, whose every desire is indulged, is by no means so proper and lively a preacher of meekness and patience and resignation to the will of God, as one who "when he is reviled revileth not again, when he suffereth threateneth not," and in his greatest agonies "committeth himself to him that judgeth righteously" with a "not my will but thine be done." Are we not affected and transported more with those admirable exhortations to patience and contentment from Epictetus who lived and died a slave, than with all the magnificent sayings to that purpose by Seneca and Antoninus, one of them a rich prime minister and the other a great Roman Emperor? Our Saviour's great moral precepts were submission to the will of God, denial of ourselves, and love and charity even to those who despitefully use us and persecute us; and certainly it was proper for him to practise what he taught, to show that he taught nothing impracticable. Some even of the heathen philosophers have thought it necessary for a *messenger of God, a perfect pattern of righteousness* to appear in a low and suffering condition. Plato in the second book of his Republic, and Arrian in his discourses upon Epictetus, speak expressly

expressly to this purpose, so expressly that one would almost think, the former prophesied of our Saviour, and the latter took his idea of a minister of God from the words of the gospel.

Thus I have endeavored by four different arguments to prove, that Christ ought to have suffered. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things?" And from these four speculative points of discourse will naturally flow as many practical inferences, which I shall but open without farther enlargement upon them.

1. As Jesus Christ suffered to fulfil the ancient prophecies, we should not be scandalized at his sufferings, having had such early notice of them, and knowing that he could not pretend to be the Messiah without them: On the contrary we should magnify and adore the wisdom and power of God in foretelling things particularly so many ages beforehand, and then in bringing to pass so wonderfully (Acts IV. 28.) "whatsoever his hand and his counsel had determined before to be done."

2. As Jesus Christ suffered for our salvation, what thanks can we pay unto the Lord for this inestimable benefit? (John XV. 13.) "Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friends:" but "God (Rom. V. 8.) commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet enemies Christ died for us." What thanks I say,

say, can we pay unto the Lord for this inestimable benefit? (Psal. CIII. 1, &c.) Shall not
 “ our souls bless the Lord, and all that is
 “ within us bless his holy name, who thus
 “ forgiveth all our iniquities and healeth all
 “ our diseases, who redeemeth our lives from
 “ destruction, and crowneth us with loving
 “ kindness and tender mercies?” Let us offer
 him not only the tribute of our lips but of
 our lives also. Christ suffered for our salvation,
 and shall we defeat the end of his sufferings?
 Christ died for us, and shall we think much
 of living to him? (1 Cor. VI. 19, 20.)
 “ We are not our own, we are bought with
 “ a price; let us therefore glorify God in our
 “ bodies and in our spirits which are God’s.”

3. As Jesus Christ suffered for the truth of
 our religion, we should not be ashamed of suffering
 for it too. (Matt. X. 24.) “ The disciple
 “ is not above his master, nor the servant
 “ above his Lord.” God be thanked, we enjoy
 halcyon days in comparison with the primitive
 Christians; we are not exposed to the like
 storms and tempests with them; but if ever we
 should undergo the same trials and persecutions,
 I hope the grace of God would enable us to exert
 the same constancy and courage. They are
 Christians in pretence only and not in reality;
 they receive the word on a rock as it is in the
 parable of the sower (Luke VIII. 13.) “ and have
 no root, who
 “ for a while believe and in time of temptation
 “ tion

tion fall away." (Heb. XII. 3.) "Let us therefore hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, and consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest we be wearied and faint in our minds."

4thly and to conclude, as Jesus Christ suffered to set us the better example, we should be the more careful to follow that example. Let us not murmur and repine, if our day of life happens to be gloomy and overcast; the sun of righteousness himself arose in clouds and set in blood. Our sorrows can never equal his sorrows; and he suffered for the sins of others, and shall we think it hard to suffer for our own sins? No; (Heb. XII. 1, 2.) "let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right-hand of the throne of God:" knowing this too, that if we partake of his sufferings we shall also partake of his glory, (Rom. VI. 5.) "if we be planted in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection."

DISSERTATION XXXI.

On the RESURRECTION of CHRIST.

SUCH is the goodness of Almighty God, that what things are necessary to be known are always easy to be known; and for those facts which are of the greatest importance, we have the best and greatest evidence. No matter of fact was ever more necessary to be believed than the resurrection of Jesus, and no matter of fact was ever better attested. For the witnesses of this fact were many in number, and they were neither deceived nor deceivers; but could they have been deceived themselves, or would they have deceived others, yet it was morally impossible for them to succeed, and the deceit must one way or other have been detected and exposed.

They were not deceived themselves, for they doubted of the thing at first, and afterwards they were not won over to the belief of it without the fullest conviction. They saw Jesus after his resurrection not once only nor in a transient manner, but for *forty* days together, and knew him to be alive by *many infallible proofs*. They had the testimony and assurance not only of one sense, but almost of all the senses; they saw him with their eyes, they
heard

heard him with their ears, with their hands they handled him, and they tasted of the bread and fish which he gave them; he ate and drank with them, he conversed with them, he explained to them the scriptures, he worked miracles before them himself, and indued them with power from on high to work the like miracles. The fondest enthusiast could not be deceived in these particulars, but supposing one man could be deceived, could all the apostles, could *above five hundred* brethren at once? If in this case they could not be certain, there is no certainty of sense in any case.

As they were not deceived themselves, so neither did they deceive others; for they were men of the strictest virtue and probity, and they ratified the truth of what they asserted by their oaths, by their miracles, by their sufferings and by their deaths. Many a man has died a martyr for a false opinion, but whoever died a martyr for a false fact, and that he knew to be false; especially too when confessing the falsehood would have saved his life and promoted him to honor? If the apostles were deceivers, they must have been deceivers, either out of some worldly motive; or through the force of enthusiasm: but that they had no worldly motive is evident from all they did and all they suffered, and their sayings and writings manifestly prove that they had not the least tincture of enthusiasm. There was

not only nothing in the world to animate them to this undertaking, but every thing to discourage them from it: and men in their circumstances would be tempted rather to disown the truth where it was, than to pretend it where it was not.

But could they have been deceived themselves, or would they have deceived others, yet it was morally impossible for the deceit to pass undiscovered. Considering the precautions of the Jews, the sepulchre made sure, the stone sealed and the watch set; considering the apostles published the resurrection of Jesus in the place where it happened, and soon after the time when it happened; considering their enemies had reasons of state which made them willing, and power and authority in their hands which made them able, curiously to pry and examin into things; it was neither probable that any fraud should be contrived, nor, if it was contrived, possible that it should take effect. Could so many men be concerned in so vile a plot, could above five hundred be let into the secret, and not one either out of honesty or out of interest inform of the rest? Could men of no courage and address, no repute and authority prevail in such an attempt against all the power and policy of the world? Falshood could never have stood the trial, but *truth is great and will prevail.*

But

But this is a point, in which, I hope, we are all thorowly satisfied, and which indeed is to be taken for granted rather than to be proved to Christian readers. And to those who are thorowly satisfied and persuaded of the resurrection of Jesus, it will be of greater advantage to inquire into the usefulness and expediency than evince the truth and certainty of it. Such a miracle would never have been wrought, unless it had been highly proper and expedient; the course of nature would never have been so far altered but upon some extraordinary occasion: And certainly if ever there was an occasion worthy of the interposition of a divine power, if ever any miracle was useful and expedient, this was so both with regard to faith and with regard to practice.

I. The resurrection of Jesus was useful and expedient with regard to *faith*; for Christianity resteth on this as its foundation, this being laid our faith standeth firm, this being overturned the whole superstructure must of necessity fall. With this Christianity is all truth, and without this it is all dream and fable. (1 Cor. XV. 14.) “If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” More particularly. One principal end and use of the resurrection of Jesus was to establish our belief that he was the Messiah, the Son of God. All his miracles were useful and expedient to confirm the truth of his divine mission, but this was more

particularly so, because this was more particularly foretold. To prove Jesus the Messiah, it was necessary, that all the marks and characters of the Messiah should visibly unite and center in him : and one of the marks and characteristics of the Messiah was the resurrection from the dead. As David speaketh, (Psal. XVI. 9, 10.) “ My flesh shall rest in hope, for
 “ thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nei-
 “ ther wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see
 “ corruption :” But as St. Peter argues with the Jews, (Acts II. 29, &c.) “ the patriarch
 “ David is both dead and buried, and his se-
 “ pulchre is with us unto this day ; therefore
 “ being a prophet and knowing that God had
 “ sworn with an oath to him, that of the
 “ fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he
 “ would raise up Christ to sit on his throne ;
 “ he seeing this before spake of the resurrec-
 “ tion of Christ, that his soul was not left in
 “ hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.” Our Saviour himself frequently prophesied of his own resurrection, and appealed to it as the great and incontestable sign of his divine mission ; (Matt. XVI. 4.) “ A wicked and adul-
 “ terous generation seeketh after a sign, and
 “ there shall no sign be given it but the sign
 “ of the prophet Jonas ;” and again, when the Jews asked him, (John II. 18, 19.) “ What
 “ sign shoudest thou unto us seeing that thou
 “ doest these things, Destroy this temple,
 “ said he, and in three days I will raise it
 “ up.”

“ up.” But the thing would not have been foretold, unless it had been judged proper and had been appointed beforehand. And indeed what could be a more proper sign, that Jesus was sent from God, than this one of the greatest of miracles. It was certainly miraculous, that Jesus should be raised from the dead at all; but that himself should raise himself is still more miraculous, and evidently proveth (John V. 26.) that “ as the Father hath life “ in himself, so hath he given to the Son to “ have life in himself.” Jesus is *declared* to be Son of God, *ἐπίσταται*, is *determined*, is *defined* “ to be the Son of God,” as St. Paul expresseth it (Rom. I. 4.) “ by the resurrection from the dead. He was made of the “ seed of David according to the flesh, and “ declared to be the Son of God with power, “ according to the Spirit of holiness, by the “ resurrection from the dead.”

Another end and use of the resurrection of Jesus was, that we might believe his exaltation and the glorious consequences of it. (Rom. XIV. 9.) “ For to this end Christ both died “ and rose and revived, that he might be lord “ both of the dead and living.” His resurrection was the first step of his exaltation, and the commencement of his kingdom; and upon this he declared to his disciples, (Matt. XXVIII. 18.) “ All power is given unto me “ in heaven and in earth.” If Jesus had been still in the grave, and his flesh had seen cor-

ruption, how could he have overcome the malice of his enemies, how could he have raised the drooping spirits of his apostles, and “spoken to them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God?” how could he have “ascended up on high, and led captivity captive, and given gifts unto men?” how as our *prophet* could he have authorised his doctrine for the doctrine of God? how as our *priest* could he have “entered into the holy place to appear in the presence of God for us?” how as our *king* could he rule over us, and reign “till the last enemy shall be destroyed?” His resurrection certainly was as necessary to his glorification as his birth was to his humiliation: in the one he appears to be really the Son of man, in the other the Son of God.

A third end and use of the resurrection of Jesus was, that we might have the stronger reason to believe the forgiveness of our sins and the justification of our persons. (1 Cor. XV. 17.) “For if Christ be not raised your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins:” And in another place, (Rom. IV. 25.) “he was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification.” In his death he offered up himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world, and his resurrection sheweth that sacrifice to have been accepted. (Rom. VI. 23.) “Death is the wages of sin,” and had Jesus died and not risen again, he could hardly

ly have been distinguished from other sinners, and much less could he have assured us of pardon and justification before God. The release of our surety is an infallible pledge and earnest of our release also. (Rom. VIII. 33, 34.)

“ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of

“ God’s elect? It is God that justifieth:

“ Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ

“ that died, yea rather that is risen again:”

Or (as the words may more conveniently be rendered and pointed) “ Who shall lay any

“ thing to the charge of God’s elect? God

“ that justifieth? Who is he that condemn-

“ eth? Christ that died, yea rather that is

“ risen again?” Asking the question, as if

nothing could be more absurd than to imagin,

that God should lay any thing to our charge

who justifieth us, that Christ should condemn

us, who died for us and is risen again. (V. 10.)

“ If when we were enemies we were recon-

“ ciled to God by the death of his Son, much

“ more being reconciled we shall be saved by

“ his life.”

A fourth end and use of the resurrection of Jesus was, that we might from thence have the stronger assurance of our own resurrection.

(1 Cor. XV. 18.) “ For if Christ be not

“ raised, then they which are fallen asleep in

“ Christ are perished.” The members can-

not rise without the head, nor on the other

side the head without the members. (1 Theff.

IV. 14.) “ If we believe that Jesus died and

“ rose again, even so them also, which sleep
 “ in Jesus, will God bring with him.” The
 resurrection of Jesus sheweth that a resurrec-
 tion is possible; and indeed why should it seem
 a thing impossible that God should raise the
 dead? Omnipotence surely can as easily raise
 us from the dead into life, as speak us into
 life out of nothing. But the resurrection of
 Jesus not only sheweth a resurrection to be
 possible, but maketh it too highly credible;
 as it is a proof of his *veracity*, for he promised
 both his own and our resurrection, and since
 the former promise is fulfilled, we cannot well
 doubt of the accomplishment also of the lat-
 ter: as it is a proof of his *acceptance with God*,
 and so he will be the *meritorious* cause of our
 resurrection, for (1 Cor. XV. 21, 22.) “ since
 “ by man came death, by man came also the
 “ resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam
 “ all die, even so in Christ shall all be made
 “ alive:” as it is a proof of his *power*, and so
 he will be the *efficient* cause of our resurrec-
 tion, for (Jolin V. 21.) “ as the Father rais-
 “ eth up the dead and quickeneth them, even
 “ so the Son quickeneth whom he will.”
 (Phil. III. 21.) “ He shall change our vile
 “ body, that it may be fashioned like unto
 “ his glorious body, according to the work-
 “ ing whereby he is able even to subdue
 “ all things unto himself.” Christ is stiled
 (Colos. I. 18.) the *first-born* from the dead,
 (Rev. I. 5.) the *first-begotten* of the dead, and
 (1 Cor.

(1 Cor. XV. 20.) the *first-fruits* of them that slept, intimating the close connection which there is between his resurrection and ours; and St. Paul not only infers our resurrection from his, but argues yet more strongly from the denial of ours to the denial of his, (1 Cor. XV. 13, 15.) "If there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not raised, yea and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God, that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not." And thus the resurrection of Jesus was useful and expedient with regard to *faith*.

II. It was likewise useful and expedient with regard to *practice*. Christianity is an improvement upon the law of nature; it raiseth morality to an higher pitch than ever it was raised by reason and philosophy; it obligeth us to all that is prescribed and more than is prescribed by the law of nature; it contains several sublime rules of duty as well as several mysterious points of faith; and the resurrection of Jesus was as useful and expedient to give authority to the former as to gain credit to the latter, as necessary to enforce the *agenda* of Christianity, the things to be done, as to confirm the *credenda*, the things necessary to be believed. For if Jesus rose not again, he was not a teacher sent from God; and if he was not a teacher sent from God, his precepts are of no force and authority. It is justly said;

said, (1 Cor. XV. 14.) "if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain;" And it might in like manner be said, if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your practice in many instances is also vain. For if Christ is not risen, the dead rise not; and if the dead rise not, what need to practise so many Christian graces and virtues, what need of so much mortification and self-denial? "Let us eat and drink for to-morrow we die." Let us enjoy and make the best of this world, since there is nothing to be hereafter. This conclusion might be right upon supposition there was no resurrection; but now another life and other manners are required of us in consequence of our Saviour's resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ has great influence upon practice, as it is a ground of hope and comfort, as it is an argument for dying unto sin and living unto righteousness, for setting our affections on things above, for overcoming the dread of death, and for persevering and abounding in the work of the Lord. And as these instances are derived from scripture, they cannot be better expressed than in the words of scripture.

The resurrection of Jesus is a ground of *hope* and *comfort*. It was reasonable to hope for life and immortality before from the light of nature, but that hope is turned almost into certainty under the gospel, and we have a pledge

pledge and earnest of a resurrection in the person of our Saviour. And what are all the vain transitory hopes of this world in comparison with the hopes of glory and honor and immortality in the world to come? "Blessed therefore (1 Pet. I. 3, 4.) be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away reserved in heaven for us."

It is an argument for *dying unto sin and living unto righteousness*; and his death will be of no benefit and advantage to us unless we die unto sin, nor his resurrection unless we live again unto righteousness. (Rom. VI. 4, &c.) "We are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection; Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him; for in that he died, he died unto sin once, but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God; likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

It

It is likewise an argument for *setting our affections on things above*; and indeed why should our affections be groveling here on earth, when our head is risen and gone before us into heaven? (Col. III. 1, &c.) “ If ye then be
 “ risen with Christ, seek those things which
 “ are above, where Christ sitteth on the right
 “ hand of God; Set your affection on things
 “ above, not on things on the earth; for ye
 “ are dead and your life is hid with Christ
 “ in God.”

Finally there cannot be a better motive for *overcoming the dread of death*, and for *persevering and abounding in the work of the Lord*. We may through the merits of Christ cry out in the same triumphant strain with the apostle — (1 Cor. XV. 55, &c.) “ O death, where is
 “ thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
 “ The sting of death is sin, and the strength
 “ of sin is the law; but thanks be to God,
 “ which giveth us the victory through our
 “ Lord Jesus Christ; therefore, my beloved
 “ brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, al-
 “ ways abounding in the work of the Lord,
 “ forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not
 “ in vain in the Lord.”

But the great thing of all, and the most conspicuous effect of our Saviour's resurrection, and the doctrins consequent thereupon, is the belief of a future state prevailing so generally in all Christian countries, that it may with the greatest truth be said (1 Tim. I. 10.) that
 “ Jesus

“ Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” *Life and immortality*, as the Hebrews express it, or as we would say *immortal life* is brought to light through the gospel, is not now first discovered and revealed the expression doth not mean, but is more explicitly revealed, φωτισται, *is illustrated* as the word properly signifies, is made clearer and more certain and evident under the gospel, than it was under any former dispensation. For we have all the light that the Gentiles had from reason, and all that the Jews received from revelation; and we have besides the additional testimony of a newer and clearer revelation, so that reason is improved to certainty, and revelation is advanced to perfection; and in this sense the prophecy of Isaiah may seem to be fulfilled, (XXX. 26.) “ The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold in the day that the Lord healeth his people.” No truth whatever can be more clearly revealed, more frequently repeated, more earnestly inculcated than is the doctrine of a future state in every book and in every page almost of the gospel. It is not taught doubtfully and uncertainly, as in the writings of Plato and Cicero or any of the philosophers, sometimes with hope and assurance, sometimes with distrust and diffidence; but is fixed, steady, certain, and like its divine author without “ va-

“riableness or shadow of turning.” It is not delivered darkly and obscurely, as in the writings of Moses and the prophets, in types and figures and distant allusions; but is plain, evident, undeniable, and like its divine author is the *light* and the *life* of the world. Wherever the light of the gospel hath shone, the belief of a future state hath prevailed universally. It is not the opinion of a single sect or of a few learned speculative men only, but is part of the creed and profession of every Christian. And though the effects of this belief may not be so visible now as in the primitive times of Christianity, yet even in these degenerate days ordinary Christians, men, women, and children, know more of a future state, and are able to give a better and more rational account of it, than any of the rabbi’s or philosophers of old; so truly and properly may it be said that “life” and immortality are brought to light through “the gospel.”

What unreasonable perverse disputers then are those men, who pretend to argue that the Christian religion is of no benefit or advantage to the world? What noble improvements hath it made in morality and religion besides this that we have insisted upon; but if there was nothing but this, yet what an internal argument is it of the truth and excellence of the Christian religion above all other religions? And what can be a more powerful recommendation of it to great and generous spirits? for
all

all who are truly such, have the greatest desires and longings after immortality. And who can be enemies to this doctrine but they who are enemies to human nature itself, stripping us of our noblest prerogative, and degrading us to the rank and level of "the beasts that perish?"

But we through the grace of God are persuaded otherwise; and how great reason have we to thank and adore his infinite goodness for "calling us out of darkness into his marvelous light?" Ought not we to live so much better than all other men, as we have so much better promises than they? Ought not we above all other men to be superior to all the temptations and all the afflictions of this world; knowing that "here we have no continuing city," and that "our light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory?" Ought not we above all other men to divest ourselves of all fondness for life, to be in no fear or apprehension of death, but even willing to shift the scene, and exchange corruption for incorruption, mortality for immortality? Ought not we above all other men to moderate our grief for the loss of departed friends and relations, and to "sorrow not even as others which have no hope," but rather to comfort ourselves, as being persuaded that they are taken from us only for a little time, and we shall soon meet again? (2 Cor. VII. 1.) "Having
" there-

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“ therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let
“ us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the
“ flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the
“ fear of God.”

DISSERTATION XXXII.

On CHRIST's rising again the third Day.

OUR Saviour's resurrection is almost an inexhaustible fund for divine meditation. There is not a single circumstance but may suggest several useful and pleasing reflections to us. One circumstance particularly there is, deserving of our more especial consideration, as being inserted in all our creeds; and that is the *time* of his resurrection, or his rising again the *third day*. Our blessed Saviour was crucified on Friday about twelve o'clock; he expired on the cross about three o'clock in the afternoon; and the same evening he was buried, because (Mark XV. 42.) “ it was the “ preparation,” that is the day before the sabbath. All Saturday or the Jewish sabbath he lay in the grave; and very early on the first day of the week or on Sunday morning he rose again from the dead. This circumstance of his rising again

again the third day, I say, deserves to be particularly considered both on its *own* account and on account of its *consequences*; on its *own* account that we may explain the reasons of it, and reconcile it to some passages of scripture; and on account of its *consequences*, as it was the occasion of our keeping Sunday holy instead of Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath.

St. Paul saith (1 Cor. XV. 4.) that "he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." So that it may be said, one reason of his rising again at that particular time was to fulfil the ancient types and prophecies. Isaac as he was a type of Christ in many things, so particularly in this: When he was ordered to be sacrificed, then he might be said to die; his sacrifice was a type of the sacrifice of Christ; and as he was restored as it were to life upon the third day, so upon the third day Christ rose again from the dead. There was another type of this in the person of Jonas; (Matt. XII. 40.) "for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so was the Son of man to be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." There was another type of this in the sheaf of first fruits; (Lev. XXIII. 10, &c.) for as the "sheaf, the first fruits of the harvest, was lifted up and waved before the Lord on the morrow after the paschal sabbath;" so Christ, the "first fruits of them that slept," was lifted up or raised from the dead on the same day, "the morrow

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“ after the paschal sabbath.” According to the psalmist, (Psal. XVI. 10.) the Holy one was not to lie so long in the grave as to “ see corruption ;” and according to the prophet Hosea, (VI. 2.) speaking figuratively of the Jews but to be understood literally of Christ, “ After two days will he revive us, in the *third day* he will raise us up and we shall live in his sight.” Agreeably to these ancient prophecies, our Saviour frequently foretold the same thing in his life-time. (Matt. XVI. 21.) “ From that time forth” (after that Peter had confessed him to be the Christ the Son of the living God) “ began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed, and be raised again the *third day* :” (—XVII. 22, 23.) Again in Galilee, after his transfiguration, “ The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men, and they shall kill him, and the *third day* he shall be raised again :” (—XX. 18, 19.) Again in his way to Jerusalem, “ Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify him, and the *third day* he shall rise again :” And upon several other occasions as may be seen in the histories of his life. Well therefore did

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He rise again the third day to fulfil the *ancient* prophecies, to fulfil *his own* prophecies. His rising again the third day or any day is wonderful, but is made still more wonderful by its being so often signified and declared beforehand by the Spirit of prophecy.

But there must be some farther reason for his rising again at that particular time. For if it had pleased God, that he should have risen again from the dead on any other day, any other day might have been foretold as well as the third day. It must therefore not only have been proper for him to have risen again the third day because it was foretold, but it must have been foretold because it was proper for him to rise again the third day. And herein the propriety or fitness of it seemeth to consist, that on the one hand he might be dead long enough for no doubt to remain of the truth and reality of his death, and on the other hand he might revive soon enough for his body which had never known sin never to know corruption. "The Holy One" (as indeed it was fitting in the reason of things and as it was foretold in scripture) "was not to see corruption:" but in all probability he would have seen corruption, had a longer time intervened between his death and his resurrection. It was said of Lazarus, (John XI. 39.) "Lord by this time he stinketh for he hath been dead four days:" and would not this equally have been the case of Jesus; would not his body

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have

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have been corrupted as soon, if not sooner by reason of his wounds, his temples having been torn with thorns, his back furrowed with scourges, his hands and feet transfixed by nails, and his side pierced by a spear? He rose again therefore at the proper point of time, neither so soon as that there might remain any doubt of the reality of his death, nor so late as that his body might see corruption. Had he risen sooner, his enemies possibly might have objected that he had not been really dead; had he lain longer, his friends might have desponded, and despaired of his ever rising again. So beautifully doth God dispose every thing in its time and season!

It is true there are some passages of scripture, which seem to clash with the account here given, with the time here defined. Christ said in his life time, (Matt. XXVII. 63. Mark VIII. 31.) "After three days I will rise again;" and upon another occasion, (Matt. XII. 40.) "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Now strictly speaking, Christ did not rise again "after three days," for he rose again the "third day;" neither was he "three days and three nights" complete in the heart of the earth, for he was buried on Friday evening and rose again on Sunday morning. But it will be no very difficult task to reconcile these passages with the others,

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as there is the greatest harmony in the sacred books of any in the world. They may sometimes seem to contradict one another, but they never do so in reality. And both of these expressions, if we had time and leisure for it, might be justified by parallel instances out of the best classic authors: but it may be proper to vindicate them by similar passages in holy scripture.

As to the former expression of rising again *after three days*, however strange such an use of the preposition may appear to us, yet at that time it was easily understood for rising again *within three days* or rising again *the third day*, after one day and part of two others. For as Rehoboam (2 Chron. X. 5.) said unto the people, "Come again unto me *after three days*;" "and all the people" (ver. 12.) "came to Rehoboam *on the third day*, as the king bade" "saying Come again to me *on the third day*:" As Christ (Luke II. 46.) was found disputing in the temple, "after three days," that is *on the third day*: So the phrase of rising again *after three days* must be equivalent to rising again *the third day*. And so the chief priests and pharisees themselves understood it, for we read they came together unto Pilate (Matt. XXVII. 62, &c.) "saying, Sir we remember "that that deceiver said while he was yet alive, "After three days I will rise again, command "therefore that the sepulchre be made sure "until the third day, lest his disciples come

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“ by night and steal him away, and say unto
“ the people He is risen from the dead.”

As to the other expression of being *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth, it is to be noted that as among us the time of twenty-four hours is called a *day*, so among the Jews it is sometimes called a *day* and sometimes a *night and a day*, as in the 1st Chapter of Genesis “ The evening and the morning” or *the night and the day* were the *day*. So that saying The Son of man shall be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth, is the same as saying The Son of man shall be *three days* in the heart of the earth. Now it is usual in all languages to express a *part* by the name of the *whole*, a *part of the day* by the *whole day*: And the Jews in particular were not unaccustomed to this manner of speaking. For as a child was to be circumcised, when he was *eight days* old, and the day of his birth was reckoned the *first day* though he was born ever so late, and the day of his circumcision was reckoned the *eighth day* though he was circumcised ever so early: As Esther declares Chapter IV. 16. “ that she will fast and neither eat
“ nor drink *three days night or day*,” and yet Chapter V. 1. “ She makes a banquet on the
“ *third day*.” So Christ by the very same figure of speaking and reckoning may be said to be *three days* in the heart of the earth, and yet rise again the *third day*.—Such critical reflections may be dry and unentertaining, but it
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can never be without its use to reconcile seemingly opposit passages of scripture one to another; that infidels may not triumph on the one hand, nor believers stagger on the other.

We have observed that our Saviour rose again on the first day of the week or Sunday, and in commemoration of this wonderful event the Apostles and primitive Christians kept *Sunday* holy instead of Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath. The first day of the week, the very day of our Saviour's resurrection, (John XX. 10.) we find the disciples assembled, and Jesus standing in the midst of them, and blessing and instructing them. Again the very next Sunday following we likewise find the disciples assembled (ver. 26.) "And after eight days," that is on the eighth day, "again his disciples were within, and Thomas was with them." Six weeks after, at Pentecost, we find the apostles assembled again on this day; (Acts II. 1, 4.) "they were all with one accord in one place, and were all filled with the Holy Ghost." Afterwards the author of the Acts of the Apostles speaketh of their assembling on this day as a settled custom among them; (XX. 7.) "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them." St. Paul, referring plainly to their religious assemblies on this day, adviseth the Corinthians, (1 Cor. XVI. 1, 2.) "Now concerning the collection for the saints as I

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“ have given order to the Churches of Galatia, even so do ye, Upon the “ *first* day of “ the week let every one of you lay by him in “ store,” that is put into the treasury, “ as “ God hath prospered him, that there be no “ gatherings when I come.” St. John in his Revelation (I. 10.) calleth this day by name “ the Lord’s day.” And in conformity to the pattern of the blessed apostles and primitive disciples, the Christian Church in all ages from the first to the last hath observed the same day instead of Saturday, which was the Jewish sabbath.

To justify this change of the sabbath made by the apostles, we will trace the thing from the fountain, beginning at the beginning. That man should worship God, the creature adore the creator, is a truth evident and undeniable; and it is no less evident and undeniable, that as God is to be worshipped, so some certain times should be set apart for worshipping him. God therefore having made the world in six days, ordained from the beginning, that every seventh day should be kept holy; (Gen. II. 2, 3.) “ And on the seventh day God ended his “ work which he had made, and rested on the “ seventh day from all his works which he “ had made; and God blessed the seventh day “ and sanctified it, because that in it he had “ rested from all his work, which God created “ and made.” The same ordinance and the same reason for it are repeated in the fourth command-

commandment ; “ Remember the sabbath-day
“ to keep it holy, for in six days the Lord
“ made heaven and earth, the sea and all that
“ in them is, and rested the seventh day,
“ wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath-day
“ and hallowed it.” The design, the moral
design, of the institution in both places is,
that *every seventh day* or *one day in seven* should
be exempted from the ordinary cares and bu-
siness of the world, and more immediately de-
dicated to religious uses and the service of God :
but which is the first day or which is the se-
venth day, as we cannot certainly know at this
distance of time, may be fixed as men shall
agree among themselves. What was the se-
venth day of the creation was the first whole
day of Adam's life, and the beginning of the
week to him : and when God renewed the in-
stitution among the children of Israel, he seem-
eth to have altered the day of rest, and to have
appointed the seventh day of the week instead
of the first to be kept as their sabbath. The
command was again repeated to the Jews with
an additional reason assigned for it peculiar to
that people, (Deut. V. 15.) “ Remember that
“ thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt,
“ and that the Lord thy God brought thee out
“ thence through a mighty hand and by a
“ stretched out arm ; therefore the Lord thy
“ God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-
“ day :” And for the better remembrance of
the strict *labor* to which they had been inured
in

in the house of bondage, that strict *rest* was enjoined them on the sabbath, insomuch that the man who gathered sticks (Numb. XV.) was ordered to be stoned.

We see therefore that in the institution of the sabbath, there is something of a positive and something of a moral nature, something of temporary and something of perpetual obligation. What is of a moral nature and of perpetual obligation, the apostles could not dispense with : but their hands were not so tied up, as to what was only of a positive nature and of temporary obligation. Now what is of a moral nature and of perpetual obligation is the setting apart of some certain times, at least one day in seven, for the more immediate worship and service of the Almighty Creator of us and all things ; and this part the apostles have preserved and confirmed, only they have changed the day from Saturday to Sunday ; and surely there is no more intrinsic goodness in one day than in another. What was of a positive nature and of temporary obligation was the keeping of that strict rest on Saturday in commemoration of the deliverance out of the land of Egypt ; and this part the apostles have canceled and abolished, so that St. Paul joineth the observation of the Jewish sabbath with the Jewish meats and drinks, and new-moons and holy-days, (Col. II. 16, 17.) “ Let no
“ man therefore judge you in meat or in drink,
“ or in respect of an holy-day, or of the new-
“ moon

“ moon or of the sabbath-days, which are a shadow of things to come, but the body is of Christ.”

It is the command of God to all men from the creation to dedicate *one day in seven* more particularly to his worship and service: the Jews therefore religiously observe every *Saturday*, Pharaoh and his Egyptians having been overwhelmed in the Red Sea *on a Saturday*: the Mohammedans religiously observe every *Friday*, their prophet having made his escape from Mecca *on a Friday*: and we Christians religiously observe every *Sunday*, our Saviour having risen again from the dead *on a Sunday*.

Our observation of this day is sufficiently authorised by the practice and examples of the Apostles and primitive Christians. The Christian religion, as it was to abolish all the Jewish ceremonies, so particularly this of the *Sabbath*. It may seem therefore strange to some that after repeating the fourth commandment we should still say, “ Lord have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep this law : ” And this was one reason why the excellent Mr. Chillingworth refused to subscribe to our liturgy and enter into holy orders, till after he had considered things more maturely and had satisfied himself in this particular: For the truth is, we pray not that we may observe the Jewish sabbath, which is abolished, but that we may dedicate one day in seven to the more immediate worship of God as the Creator of
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the world. Accordingly we religiously observe *one day in seven* in commemoration of the old creation ; and this one day in seven with us is *Sunday* in commemoration of the new creation by Jesus Christ ; the Jewish sabbath being as it were buried with our Saviour, and Sunday by his resurrection being become the *Lord's day*. The Jewish sabbath was no more than a type of the Christan, their deliverance a type of ours ; theirs from the Egyptian bondage, ours from the bondage of sin and death ; and if the former deserved to be commemorated weekly, how much more the latter ?

How highly blameable then are those Christians, who forsake the assembling of themselves together, and will not vouchsafe even one day in seven, to bless their creator and commemorate their redeemer ? And what can be the final end of such persons, but that
“ whosoever hath been ashamed of him and
“ his words in this generation, of him also
“ shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he
“ cometh in the glory of his Father with the
“ holy angels ? ” How is it possible for them, who refuse to devote to him so small a portion of their time in this life, ever to expect to be made happy with him to all eternity in the next ? Every day of our lives we ought to dedicate to the worship and service of God, as we have opportunity and ability : but one day in seven is particularly required of us by the laws of God, and the laws of our country ;
and

and to employ it in business is wrong, for what business can be of greater concern and consequence to us, than the duties of religion and the salvation of our immortal souls? but to consume it in pleasures and diversions is worse, and is such an abuse of God's mercies as nothing can extenuate or excuse. They must not only not be Christians, but even worse than Heathens; they must not only be destitute of all sense of gratitude, but must be like the brute beasts without understanding, and never consider that God is their creator and preserver, or Jesus Christ their Saviour and redeemer, that he died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, and we should also die unto sin, and live again unto righteousness. To a generous mind nothing certainly can be more pleasing than gratitude and thanksgiving; and what can be more deserving of our gratitude and thanksgiving than the mercies of God in Christ Jesus? We may very fitly therefore take up the words of the psalmist, and say, as spoken by him they were prophetic, but as applied by us they are fulfilled, (Psal. CXVIII. 22, &c.)

“ The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, it is marvelous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it. O give thanks unto the Lord for he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever.”

DISSERTATION XXXIII.

On our SAVIOUR's ASCENSION.

AFTER our Saviour had showed himself alive again to his apostles by "many infallible proofs," and had conversed with them "forty days, speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," he "led them out as far as to Bethany, to the mount called Olivet," and there in the presence of them all "was carried up into heaven." There are different heavens, as we learn from scripture; and different degrees or stations in heaven. The "third heaven" is mentioned by St. Paul, (2 Cor. XII. 2.) and our Saviour saith in St. John's gospel, (XIV. 2.) that "in his Father's house are many mansions." But Jesus ascended to the place of the highest honor and dignity, and the strongest terms possible are employed in speaking of his exaltation. (Heb. IV. 14.) "He passed into the heavens," or rather διελθὺς τοὺς οὐρανοὺς, "He passed through the heavens;" (VII. 26.) "He was made higher than the heavens;" (Eph. IV. 10.) "He ascended up far above all heavens;" as it is expressed in different places of scripture; "and sat on the right-hand of God."

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The phrase of “ sitting on the right-hand of God ” we know very well is purely metaphorical, for God is a spirit without body and without parts : and consequently as to sit on the right-hand of the king is the place of highest honor and precedence among men, so to sit on the right-hand of God must signify to be next in power and dominion to God himself. Christ is sometimes said to *be* on the right-hand of God, and sometimes to *stand* on the right-hand of God ; but the most usual expression is *sitting* on the right-hand of God, to denote the full possession, the security, and perpetuity of his dominion. By virtue of his divine nature he was indeed in heaven even while he was upon earth ; but now he ascended thither in his human nature, in his human soul and body, by local motion, of which the infinity of the divine nature is not capable. As the Son of God, he was in heaven before ; but now he ascended thither, as the Son of man. For there is not the least ground or pretence for thinking with some ancient heretics, that his humanity was swallowed up by his divinity. No, the man Christ Jesus who suffered and died here on earth, now liveth and reigneth in heaven ; in the same nature in which he suffered, in the same is he glorified.

The ascension and glorification of Christ must needs be a pleasing subject of reflection to Christians. The soul cannot but feel herself

self raised and exalted by such meditations. It is a theme of large extent both with regard to speculation and with regard to practice. Every way we may think of it with delight and improvement, whether we consider the *types* and *prophecies* which presignified and foretold it, or the *ends* and *reasons* of it, or the *particular circumstances* with which it was attended, or lastly the *moral* and *religious uses* which may be made of it.

I. It was certainly a surprising revolution, that he, who had so lately suffered as a malefactor and expired on a cross, should ascend into heaven and be seated at the right-hand of the majesty on high, (1 Pet. III. 22.) “angels” and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.” But there were several notices to prepare the world for this extraordinary event, several *types* which presignified, several *prophecies* which foretold it.

Of *types* I think the first and most ancient is Enoch the seventh from Adam. He was translated to heaven, because “he pleased God” as the apostle speaketh; (Heb. XI. 5.) and was therefore a proper type of the ascension of the “beloved Son, (Matt. III. 17.) in whom “God was well pleased.”—In like manner the prophet Elijah was taken up into heaven in the presence of Elisha, and a portion of the master’s spirit descended to the scholar: and what an exact image and representation was here of our Saviour’s ascension into heaven in
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the presence of his disciples, and of his mission afterwards of the Holy Ghost upon them in consequence of it?—As the High-priest was in many things a type of Jesus, so particularly in this, that he entered once every year into the holy place (Heb. IX. 7.) “not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people:” So Christ, as the instance is applied by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, (XI. 12.) “being come an high-priest of good things to come by his own blood entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.” The holy place into which the high-priest entered was a figure of heaven into which Christ entered; for as the same apostle saith afterwards (ver. 24.) “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us.”—The patriarch Joseph was a lively type of Jesus in his exaltation, as indeed in many other circumstances of his life. The parallel is very remarkable between them: Joseph, the favorite of his father, sent to visit his brethren, and sold by them for twenty pieces of silver; Jesus, the beloved Son of God, sent into the world, and sold for thirty pieces of silver by one of his disciples: Joseph, suffering for his innocence, in prison between two criminals; Jesus, also suffering for his innocence, on the cross between two

thieves : Joseph foretelling deliverance to one of his fellow-prisoners, and denouncing death to the other ; Jesus promising pardon and happiness to one of his fellow-sufferers, and abandoning the other : Joseph from prison advanced next to Pharaoh, and made ruler over all the land of Egypt ; Jesus after his passion exalted to the right-hand of God, and (Matt. XXVIII. 10.) " all power given unto him in " heaven and in earth."—We have yet another memorable type in the exaltation of David from a low state of suffering to a kingdom, and he speaketh often of his own case in terms which do not so properly belong to him, but are rather prefigurative of the Messiah. (Psal. XXI. 1, 4, &c.) " The King " shall joy in thy strength O Lord ; He ask-
 " ed life of thee, and thou gavest it him,
 " even length of days for ever and ever ; His
 " glory is great in thy salvation ; honor and
 " majesty hast thou laid upon him ; For thou
 " hast made him most blessed for ever ;" and other passages there are in the same strain and spirit.

But there were not only *types* which may be thought perhaps more arbitrary and admittive of a greater latitude of interpretation ; but there were also several *prophecies*, which pointed out this event more directly and plainly.—The XXIVth Psalm was composed by David on occasion of his bringing the Ark of God to the tabernacle in Mount Sion ; but doubtless,

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it was intended likewise as a prophecy of the ascension of Christ our Lord, several verses in it being rather more applicable to this latter occasion than to the former, and it seemeth to have been understood so by the ancient Jews themselves; (ver. 7.) "Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lift up ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory shall come in."—In the LXVIIIth Psalm we have that famous prophecy, (ver. 18.) "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive," so literally true of our Saviour's ascension into heaven, and triumphing over Sin and Death and all the powers of Hell. And we may be the more certain that we mistake not in applying the prophecy in this manner, for it is in this manner applied (Eph. IV. 8.) by St. Paul himself.—There is another famous prophecy in another Psalm of David's, (Psalm CX. 1.) "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right-hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool;" And who can this "Lord of David," this "priest for ever after the order of Melchisedek," be but the Messiah? So Jesus and the Jews of his time (Matt. XXII. 44.) understood it, and so St. Peter expounds it, (Acts II. 34, &c.) "For David, saith he, is not ascended into the heavens, but he saith himself The Lord said unto my Lord Sit thou on my right-hand until I make thy foes thy footstool; Therefore let all the house of Israel know
O 2 " assuredly

“ assuredly that God hath made this same
 “ Jesus whom ye have crucified both Lord
 “ and Christ.”—One citation more will be
 sufficient, and that shall be Daniel’s vision of
 the kingdom of the Messiah ; (Dan. VII. 13,
 14.) “ I saw in the night visions, and behold
 “ one like the Son of man came with the
 “ clouds of heaven, and came to the ancient
 “ of days, and they brought him near before
 “ him ; And there was given him dominion
 “ and glory and a kingdom, that all people,
 “ nations and languages should serve him ;
 “ his dominion is an everlasting dominion
 “ which shall not pass away, and his king-
 “ dom that which shall not be destroyed.”—
 It was therefore necessary for our Saviour to
 ascend into heaven in order to fulfil the *ancient*
prophecies ; but it was made still more neces-
 sary, because he had so often promised and
 foretold the same thing himself in his life-
 time. And after he had ascended, the pro-
 phecies and the event, compared together,
 would illustrate and confirm each other, and
 strengthen the faith of his disciples.

II. These were not the only *ends* and *reasons*
 of our Lord’s ascension. It was not only fit
 and proper, because it was foretold ; but it
 was foretold, because it was originally fit and
 proper, and designed from the beginning.
 And some of the *reasons* of it we may collect
 from some hints given us here and there in
 scripture.—There were yet several ages to
 come

come before the end of the world and the general judgment. Him therefore (Acts III. 21.) "the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."—With regard to *himself* this exaltation was a just and proper reward of his humiliation. (Phil. II. 8, 9.) "He humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."—With regard to his *disciples* it was a strong confirmation of their faith; a sensible demonstration that he had come from God, when he went to God; and they, who had doubted of his divine mission before, could doubt no longer when they saw him ascend thus triumphantly into heaven.—Thither he ascended, that as our *King* he might subdue his enemies, and protect his subjects. (1 Cor. XV. 25, 26.) "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet, The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—Thither he ascended that as our *Priest* he might enter into the presence of God and intercede for us. For (Heb. IX. 24.) "Christ is entered into heaven itself now to appear in the presence of God for us;" And (Heb. VII. 29.) "he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."—Thither he ascended that, as our *Prophet*, he might send down the Holy

Ghost to enlighten and instruct, to support and comfort us. For as he said himself to his disciples; (John XVI. 7.) "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you."—One farther end and reason of our Lord's ascension was, as he himself declares, (John XIV. 3.) "to prepare a place for us, that where he is there we may be also." As his resurrection was a pledge and earnest of our's, so likewise is his ascension into heaven of our being taken up thither too. "He as the forerunner is entered for us," (Heb. VI. 20.) and at the last day, (1 Thess. IV. 17.) "we shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

III. We may not only discover the greatest fitness and propriety in the thing itself, but likewise in the *particular circumstances* with which it was attended. So wisely and beautifully doth Providence dispose and order events, that in the life and actions of our Saviour there is not a single passage, there is not the least circumstance, that is not of some importance and signification.

We may observe that our Saviour ascended *in the presence of the apostles*; and indeed it was requisite that to such a transaction there should be a competent number of witnesses. The apostles did not see him in the act of his resur-

resurrection, but they saw him in the act of his ascension; for there was not the same necessity of their being spectators in the former case as in the latter. There was really no necessity at all of their seeing him rise from the dead, it being to all intents and purposes sufficient, if they saw him after he was risen, and knew him to be alive again by "many infallible proofs." But there was a necessity of their seeing him ascend into heaven, because they could not see him after he was ascended; and otherwise they could not have been such capable witnesses of the truth of the fact, and could have received the knowledge of it afterwards only from revelation.

It is farther observable, that he was taken up into heaven, while he was *blessing* his disciples. (Luke XXIV. 50, 51.) "And he lift up his hands and blessed them; And it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." This was very suitable and congruous. It was keeping up his character. It was doing in the last act upon earth, what he had been doing all his life before. It was exercising the disposition, and doing the work of heaven even while he was going thither; and in this, as well as in other things, (1 Pet. II. 21.) he "left us an example that we should follow his steps."

(The *place* from which he ascended was the Mount of Olives, I suppose on account of its

proximity to Jerusalem. This too had been the scene of his passion, and fitly therefore was it of his ascension. As the apostles had seen him here in his agony, so here they saw him enter upon his glory. And mountains as being more conspicuous seem to have been, not casually but designedly, the scenes of the most memorable transactions. Abraham was ordered to offer up Isaac on a mountain; the law was given on a mountain; and Moses was ordered to go up into a mountain to die; and David's tabernacle and Solomon's temple were built on mountains. We read often of our Saviour's going up into a mountain to pray; on a mountain he delivered his doctrine to the people; on a mountain he chose his twelve apostles; on a mountain he was transfigured; he died on Mount Calvary, and ascended from Mount Olivet.

There is something remarkable too in the *manner* of his ascent. It was slow and leisurely, and as much unlike that of Elijah, as the spirit of the gospel is different from that of the law. Elijah was taken up (2 Kings II. 11.) "by a whirlwind in a chariot of fire" "with horses of fire;" but Jesus ascended gently "in a cloud," and the apostles stood "gazing" and "looking steadfastly toward" "heaven as he went up." Elijah too spake doubtfully to Elisha, whether the spirit should descend upon him or not, (2 Kings II. 10.) "Thou hast asked a hard thing; nevertheless

“ if thou see me when I am taken from thee,
 “ it shall be so unto thee ; but if not, it shall
 “ not be so :” But Jesus gave an absolute pro-
 mise to his disciples, (Acts I. 5.) “ Ye shall
 “ be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many
 “ days hence.” Fifty men searched for Elijah
 “ three days, (2 Kings II. 16.) “ lest per-
 “ adventure the Spirit of the Lord had taken
 “ him up, and cast him upon some mountain
 “ or into some valley :” But the apostles en-
 tertained no such doubts about Jesus ; they
 knew very well that he had come from God
 and went to God.

Angels also were witnesses of his ascension,
 to give the greater grandeur and solemnity to
 the thing, and likewise to assure the apostles of
 his reception into heaven, whither their eyes
 could not follow him. Angels had proclaimed
 his nativity, angels had proclaimed his resur-
 rection, and now they proclaimed his ascension.

One farther design in the *manner* and *cir-
 cumstances* of our Lord's ascension was to let
 us see the *manner* and *circumstances* of his
 coming to judgment. He ascended in a *cloud*,
 with the *holy angels* ; and in like manner he
 will come again “ in the clouds of heaven,”
 and “ the holy angels with him.” There is
 not only the divine testimony to assure us of
 it, but what hath been done may be done
 again. (Acts I. 11.) “ This same Jesus,
 “ which is taken up from you into heaven,
 “ shall

“ shall so come in like manner, as ye have
 “ seen him go into heaven.”

IV. But there is not any article of the Christian faith, that terminates only in speculation, and hath not some influence upon practice. The doctrines of Christianity are all designed to make us better men as well as better Christians; and several *moral* and *religious* uses may be made of this in particular which we have been explaining. We will specify some of the principal.

One use that may be made of this doctrine is to teach us subjection and obedience to our Lord Christ. For he is ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God, “ all
 “ power being given unto him in heaven and
 “ in earth;” and shall not we therefore render him the tribute of our hearts and lives, revere his doctrines, obey his precepts, desire nothing beyond his favor, and dread nothing beyond his displeasure? “ He must reign till he hath
 “ put all enemies under his feet:” (1 Cor. XV. 25.) Principalities and all the powers of darkness must submit: And what is impotent ignorant man, that he should pretend to resist his will? Man the most obliged to him and the most dependent upon him of all intelligent beings? It is in vain for us to kick against the pricks. One way or other we must acknowledge his power and dominion either in our salvation or in our destruction. “ Serve the
 “ Lord”

“ Lord” therefore “ with fear,” as the good psalmist speaketh, (Psalm II. 11, 12.) “ rejoice with trembling ; Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little ; blessed are all they that put their trust in him.”

Another use that may be made of this doctrine is to quicken and animate our devotion, For is Christ “ entred into heaven now to appear in the presence of God for us ;” (Heb. IX. 24.) and shall not we therefore place all our confidence in his prevailing name and merits ? shall we ever so far disparage his mediatorship, as to set up other mediators, the Virgin Mary, or Saints or Angels ? As the son of man he had experience of our wants, as the Son of God he is able to supply them, (Heb. IV. 15, 16.) “ We have not an high-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin : Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

A third use that may be made of this doctrine is to raise our hopes and comfort us in our passage through this life, For what can be a greater fund of hope and consolation than the thoughts of Jesus being exalted in our nature to the right hand of God ? What sublime notions must this give us of the dignity of human nature, and how unworthy must it be in us

us to debase and demean it? What evil things should we fear, what good things may we not hope and expect, when we have so powerful a representative and friend in the court of heaven? What an earnest is this of our advancement to heaven in due season; and what can more effectually abate the edge of affliction, and take away the sting of death? (Rom. VIII. 33, 34.) “Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? God that justifieth? “Who is he that condemneth? Christ that died, yea rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?”

A fourth use that may be made of this doctrine is to purify and exalt our affections, to wean them from the things of this world, and fix them upon the joys of the next, whither our Saviour is gone before to prepare a place for us. Christ our treasure is above, and shall our hearts be here below? Our head is in heaven, and shall the members lie groveling on earth? There can be no union with Christ and the world together. (Col. III. 1, 2.) “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God; Set your affection on things above not on things on the earth.”

Finally. As we believe that our Saviour will come *from* heaven, in like manner as he went *into* heaven, let us fit and prepare ourselves

selves to receive him; let him not catch us sleeping, or doing worse than sleeping; let our loins be girded about, and our lights burning, that so (Col. III. 4.) “when Christ, “who is our life, shall appear, we may also “appear with him in glory.” (Rev. XX. 20.) “Amen, Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

DISSERTATION XXXIV.

On the Use of Reason in Religion.

IT is common with men to run down things in extremes, or to cry them up in extremes; and of all sorts of things there has nothing been more extravagantly magnified on one side, and more unworthily depreciated on the other than the *use of reason in religion*. Some men attribute too much, and others too little to reason. Some exalt it as the only rule and guide in matters of religion, and others decry it again as no rule or guide at all. The first look upon it as their pole-star, or rather as their sun, that drowneth every other light of heaven in its superior lustre: the others regard

regard it no more than an ignis fatuus or wild-fire, a vapor of the earth, which if pursued will lead a man out of the way to a bog or a precipice. The one sort denies every thing of a mystery in religion, and will receive nothing for an article of faith that cannot be comprehended as perfectly as a mathematical proposition: the other sort esteems a thing the more mysterious the more orthodox, and the more unreasonable it is to believe it, the greater merit there is in believing. With those, to submit to proper authority is to follow like beasts in the herd, and it is altogether as ridiculous and absurd to admit what is above reason as what is against reason: with these, to doubt of one of their articles of religion is no better than heresy, and an impartial inquiry into the grounds of religion is scepticism, infidelity, atheism, and what not. In a word the former set up reason in opposition to faith, and the latter cry up faith in opposition to reason.

Now that we may keep the mid way between these two extremes neither turning to the right hand nor to the left; that we may not like these worse than Procrustes lop reason too short, or stretch it too far, to make it suit our purposes; that neither our Christian liberty may run into licentiousness, nor our submission to Church-authority sink into slavery; it is my design first to justify the use of reason in religion, and then to confine it within its due

bounds and limits; to show generally that reason is to be used in religion, and particularly how it is to be used, in what cases it is proper to exercise it, and in what again to exercise it would be improper.

I. In the first place I am to justify the use of reason in religion; and that may be done upon these grounds and principles; because there is no good argument against it, and there are several good arguments for it, and after all, whether we will or not we must in some measure use our reason in religion, if we are of any religion at all.

There is no good argument *against* the use of reason in religion. For the best and most specious argument usually offered is this, that if men are permitted to use their reason and to judge for themselves in matters of religion, then farewell peace farewell unity in the Church, flourish schism, flourish heresy, so many men so many creeds and opinions. And such tragical exclamations are some of the main pillars of that proud and monstrous fabric, the infallibility of the Pope and Church of Rome. But let it be considered, that it is not the use of reason that leadeth a man into heresy and the like, but the abuse of it: and to argue (1) from the abuse of a thing against the use of it is what the rules of logic will never admit. Men may abuse their civil liberties, but must

(1) *Ab abusu ad usum non valet consequentia.*

they

they therefore be made the slaves of arbitrary power? Men may abuse every thing they have and enjoy, their life and being itself, but must they therefore have and enjoy nothing, no life or being at all? In like manner must they not be suffered to use their reason, lest they should happen to abuse it; and for fear of thinking themselves into heresy, must they be taught not to think at all? The unity of the Church is a desirable thing, but not to be purchased with the loss of reason, the loss of liberty. It is better for men to differ like men than unite like a drove of beasts. In short whatever is said against reason must be said either with reason or without reason: If without reason, no body I suppose will regard it; if with reason, it is confirming the very thing which is attempted to be overthrown.

As there is no good argument against the use of reason in religion, so there are several good arguments *for it*. For otherwise how shall we know whether we are in the right or in the wrong, whether we are in the light and the way to salvation, or are walking on in darkness and the shadow of death? For what end was our reason given us but to be used? And is it to be used in lesser matters and not in greater; in things temporal and not in spiritual; in the perishing trifles of this world and not in the everlasting concerns of the world to come? Reason is the most precious talent we have, and what distinguisheth us chiefly

chiefly from the brute-creation; and God will punish us severely if we bury this talent or any part of it in a napkin. To use our reason in religion is not only our duty as we are men, but more particularly as we are Christians. For otherwise how can we "be ready always" to give a reason of the hope that is in us," as St. Peter exhorts us; (1 Pet. III. 15.) how can we, as St. Paul commands us, (1 Theff. V. 21.) "prove all things and hold fast that which is good;" how can we follow the direction of St. John, (1 John IV. 1.) "Be-loved, believe not every spirit but try the spirits whether they are of God;" and finally how can we answer the demand of our blessed Saviour (Luke XII. 57.) "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" Well may the Scripture oblige us to this task, for without judgment, without choice, no faith, no religion can be pleasing and acceptable to God. God hath made us reasonable creatures, and he will expect from us a (Rom. XII. 1.) "reasonable service," and not (Eccles. V. 1.) the "sacrifice of fools."

After all, whether we will or not, we must in some measure use our reason in religion, if we are of any religion at all. For it is plain that we must either judge for ourselves in matters of religion, or leave others to judge for us; but we cannot even leave others to judge for us without judging at the same time for ourselves, and thinking this method more proper for us than the other. Nay the greatest

advocates for implicit faith and blind obedience are forced to allow a partial use of reason and private judgment: they say that we must in all things believe and obey the Church, but we must first judge and determin with ourselves Which is the Church; and what are all their discourses and writings but so many addresses and appeals to our reason? That is, they would have us hear all the reasons which can be offered for their religion, but none which can be objected against it; and generally men recommend reason as long as they think they have reason on their side, and it is only when reason is against them that they are against reason.

We see how reasonable, how necessary it is to use our reason in religion. We cannot wholly extinguish the light within us, let us not put it under a bushel. We must exercise our reason in some sort, let us exercise it so as not to abuse it. "Ye are bought with a price, be not the slaves of men," saith the apostle; (1 Cor. VII. 23.) and which, think we, is worse the slavery of the body or of the mind and conscience? The Spirit of God in Scripture frequently appeals to the judgment of men. "I speak as to wise men, judge ye what I say," saith St. Paul (1 Cor. X. 15.) "Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?" saith our Saviour. "Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard," saith God himself in the prophet; (Isa. V. 3.) and shall frail men be so presumptuous

presumptuous as to take away this liberty of judgment, by which the Apostle, by which our Saviour, by which God himself condescends to be tried? In the XVIIth Chapter of Acts the Bereans are highly commended for searching the scriptures daily to see whether those things were so or not which were said by the apostle who was certainly infallible: and shall we be excommunicated and delivered over to Satan as Schismatics and Heretics, for searching the scriptures in like manner to see whether those things are so or not which are decreed by them whom we certainly know to be not infallible, Popes and Councils, or whoever they be who act like Popes and Councils? Every man is a Pope, who usurps authority over the faith and conscience of another?

One cannot observe without some sort of pleasure, that the greatest enemies to reason, are the greatest enemies too to the Church of England, the Papists in one extreme and some enthusiastic Sectaries in the other: and usually (Matt. XV. 14.) "the blind are the leaders of the blind," and so they "both fall into the ditch." Others there are indeed, who are not in either of these extremes, and yet are apt to be strangely alarmed at a free inquiry into religion, and think that such things ought not to be tolerated in a Christian country: but surely they mistake the spirit of the gospel, and are afraid where no fear is. True

religion will always gain by an inquiry; the more it is examined by reason, the more reasonable still it will be found: but if our religion is in any respect false, why should the falsity be screened and protected, since it can never be pleasing to a God of truth. It looketh as if a man was not well satisfied with the goodness of his cause, who refuseth to bring it to the bar of reason, that it may have a fair and impartial trial. Indeed we must "hold fast" that which is "good," but we must "first prove all things." There is no virtue in embracing the truth, unless we have tried and know it to be the truth. They who believe they know not why, are in the high way to believe they know not what; and having faith without reason is a great step towards having faith against reason. God be thanked, brethren, (Gal. IV. 31. V. 1.) "we are not the children of the bond woman but of the free; stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ" and under him our Reformers "have made us free, and be not intangled again with the yoke of bondage."

II. But it may be asked, if reason is to be used in religion, is it to be used indifferently in all things in religion? and therefore having shown generally that reason is to be used in religion, I proceed in the 2d place to shew particularly how it is to be used, in what cases

cases it is proper to exercise it, and in what again to exercise it would be improper.

Not that it is proper for every one, nor indeed is every one qualified to exercise his reason in matters of religion. Young and illiterate persons, and those who are constantly engaged in servile offices and employments, are by no means competent judges of these things, but should contentedly submit to the directions and instructions of their parents and masters. Where reason is wanting, authority should supply the place; and if children are not "trained up in the way that they should go," they will go the way that they should not to their own destruction; if they are not taught what is good, they will learn of themselves what is evil. The people in general should have a deference to their clergy, the pastors and ministers of their respective congregations, who have made these things their peculiar study, and must of consequence understand them better. (Mal. II. 7.) "The priests lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth." It is a bad sign when people forsake their lawful ministers, and (2 Tim. IV. 3.) "will not endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." It is worse when ignorant tradesmen and mechanics usurp the ministers office, and because they can repeat by rote several texts of scripture, and perhaps quote chapter and verse, set

up for teachers and preachers of the gospel; (1 Tim. I. 7.) "understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." No wicked man can be fair and impartial in his inquiries after truth; his passions and his vices are a clog and bias to his understanding; he must first "be willing to do the will of God," as our Saviour saith, (John VII. 17.) and then he "shall know of the doctrine." (Dan. XII. 10.) "None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." Neither is ridicule the exercise of reason, nor a sufficient test of truth; for false wit may render even the best of persons and the best of things ridiculous. "A scorner," as Solomon saith, (Prov. XIV. 6.) "seeketh wisdom, and findeth it not;" he aimeth at wit, and misseth the truth. When the use of reason in religion is recommended, it must be supposed to be recommended only to reasonable creatures; and to such persons there are some cases wherein it may be proper to exercise our reason, and some again where it is improper.

These then are the cases of religion wherein it is *proper* to exercise our reason. Reason must prove to us the being of a God and the great duties of natural religion; for (Heb. XI. 6.) "he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;" and these are things which divine revelation doth not prove, but always necessarily presupposeth and taketh
for

for granted. These are the foundation, and revelation is the superstructure upon them; and in what can this foundation be laid, but in reason? And then supposing a revelation to come from God, yet reason must be the judge of what really doth so, and what not. Reason is the touch-stone to distinguish true revelation from false, the genuin ore from baser metal, And then supposing it known that such or such a thing is a revelation from God, yet reason must still judge what is the true sense of that true revelation; and we must never receive any interpretation of the word of God that manifestly contradicts sense and reason. For instance These words (Matt. XXVI. 26.) "this is my body" are part of divine revelation; but of the true sense and meaning of these words reason must be the judge and interpreter; and there being two interpretations of them, the one literal and manifestly contrary to reason, the other figurative and consistent enough with reason, we therefore reject the former of these interpretations and embrace the latter.

The cases of religion wherein it is *not proper* to exercise our reason, are those things which are revealed by God, and yet are above reason or not contrary to reason. Indeed if a thing is evidently contrary to reason, we must reject it and we cannot help rejecting it, as not coming from God; for how is it possible for us to believe a thing to be true at the same

time that we know it evidently to be false? But if a thing is not against reason, but only above it (and surely there are many things above our finite reason and narrow understanding) and moreover if it is revealed by God, it is our duty then to submit our reason to that revelation, and implicitly to believe what we cannot thoroughly comprehend. For the thing is above reason, and therefore we cannot certainly know it to be false: but we may certainly know it to be true upon this ground, because it is revealed by God, who is so wise as not to be deceived, so good as not to deceive. To give only one instance in the doctrine of the Ever blessed Trinity. We are baptized (Matt. XXVIII. 19.) “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” We are blessed in their name, (2 Cor. XIII. 14.) “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all. Amen.” (1 John V. 7.) “The Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, these three are one;” if it be not the genuine reading of the text, yet it is the genuine sense of several texts in scripture. The *Father* is styled *God*, the *Son* *God*, and the *Holy Ghost* *God*; and yet there is but one *God*. This doctrine therefore we are to receive as a most certain truth, tho’ the particular manner of their existence how they are *three* and how they are *one*, we have neither proper words to express
nor

nor adequate ideas to conceive. That those who are three in one respect are one in another respect, *may* possibly be true, and therefore I cannot absolutely deny it: but that it really *is* true, I have an infallible testimony, and therefore—"Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief."

Another wrong use of reason in religion and equally pernicious with rejecting things above reason is pretending to explain things above reason and to define what God has left undefined, and then enforcing these explanations and definitions as of equal authority with the word of God. And here it must be confessed that almost all parties have been more or less to blame, protestants as well as papists, orthodox churchmen as well as heretical dissenters, forsaking the firm ground of reason and revelation, and soaring above the clouds in vain empty speculations, spinning and refining too much, fustlelizing their theology by metaphysical distinctions, inquiring and arguing about points which they can never fully comprehend, racking and torturing the same texts to speak different senses agreeably to their different systems, seldom or never resting in the plain meaning and the plain words of scripture, but searching farther and farther, and after the example of the schools, but contrary to the practice of the apostles, (1 Cor. II. 13.) substituting other terms and phrases, such as "man's wisdom teacheth," but not such as "the

“ the Holy Ghost teacheth.” But who art thou, O man, who thus intrudest thyself into the holy of holies, and pretendest to be wise above what is written? Canst thou express the mind of the Holy Ghost better than the Holy Ghost himself? or if it was necessary that these things should be understood more certainly, would they not have been delivered more plainly? Whatever thou may’st think, the things of God (the mysterious things of God especially) are best expressed in the words of God? and in vain dost thou worship God (as it is again and again declared in scripture) “ teaching for doctrines the commandments “ of men.” (Deut. XXIX. 29.) The “ secret “ things belong unto the Lord our God, but “ those things which are revealed belong “ unto us and to our children for ever, “ that we may do all the words of this “ law.”

We see what is the province of reason in religion, and let us not pretend to be wise above what is written nor against what is written, neither adding any thing to the word of God by our interpretations nor by our interpretations diminishing ought from it, for this is the way, (Rom. I. 22.) that “ professing ourselves wise we shall become “ fools.” Our reason never acteth more reasonably, than when it submits itself to infinite reason. God gave us this talent at first, and we never put it out to better interest, than

than when we reposit it (as I may say) in his hands again. His *ipse dixit* is proof sufficient, proof infallible, and none other's is so. Fathers may err, and Councils may be deceived; but as the apostle expresseth it (Rom. III. 4.) "let God be true though every man is a liar."

To conclude. God hath joined reason and revelation together; "what God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." They are both the gifts of God; for (James I. 17.) "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights;" (John I. 9.) "He is the light which lighteth every man who cometh into the world," whether by reason or revelation or both. They are both I say the gifts of God, and differ only in the manner of conveyance. Reason is natural revelation, and revelation is supernatural reason: And so far are they from being opposites that they do mutual service, and are as it were eyes and feet the one to the other. Revelation cannot stand, unless supported by reason; and reason can see little in religious matters, unless enlightened by revelation. It is true there are several mysteries in our religion, as indeed in what are there not mysteries to human understanding? I say, it is true there are several mysteries in our religion, but there are no contradictions. As we are Christians, we must believe many things above reason;

as we are Christians and Protestants, we should believe nothing against reason, nothing without reason: And reason can never rest upon any more certain conclusion than this, "God hath said it and therefore it is true." Wherefore (Matt. XXIII. 9, 10.) "call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven; neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ."

DISSERTATION XXXV.

ON MYSTERIES.

THERE are two sorts of men, and it is not easy to say which is guilty of the greater absurdity and commits the greater violation on scripture, they who deny every thing of a mystery, or they who make a mystery of every thing in religion. It is certain the truth, in this as in most other cases, lieth in the middle between the two extremes; neither is all plain nor all mysterious; there is a just proportion and mixture of light and shade; enough plain to direct our practice, enough mysterious to exercise our faith. We *know*
but

but we *know in part*, we *prophecy* but we *prophecy in part*, we *see* but we *see through a glass darkly*. Indeed why some parts of revelation should be plain and easy to be understood, every one may immediately see the expedience and necessity: but for what reasons may we presume that other parts are as it were cast into shades and wrapt in clouds and darkness? The *reasonableness of mysteries* appears not to every one at first view: but I hope it may satisfy the most curious, and silence the most obstinate, if we consider in the first place that a thing may be true and we may know it to be true though we cannot fully comprehend it; the mysteriousness of a thing is no objection to the truth of it: if we consider in the next place that neither was it possible nor is it necessary that we should perfectly comprehend every thing in religion: if we consider in the third place that several reasons may be assigned why some things should remain mysteries to us in this world: and lastly if we consider that the fuller and more perfect comprehension of these things will make part of our happiness in the world to come. (1 Cor. XIII. 9, 10.)

Now “we know in part and we prophecy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.”

I. A thing may be true and we may know it to be true, though we cannot fully comprehend it. The mysteriousness of a thing is no objection

objection to the truth of it, unless we pretend to say that every thing must be false which we cannot comprehend. But how many things are true and we also know to be true, which surpass and baffle all the wit of man? Philosophy hath its mysteries as well as religion, and I know not whether there are not more in the former than in the latter. If we look within us, we know there is something that apprehends, that reflects, that wills and chooses; but what man can fully explain the wonderful union and sympathy between his soul and his body, and how it cometh to pass that with a thought of the one he can instantly move any part of the other? If we look without us, there is not an animal, there is not a vegetable, there is not a piece of matter but is a mystery to the greatest philosopher; and who can give us a clear account how the first liveth, how the second groweth, and how the parts of the third adhere together? It is capable of the strictest demonstration that matter is not self-existent and therefore must have been created; but who can raise his imagination so high as to conceive how matter was created, how something was produced out of nothing? If there are such mysteries in the material world, how much more in the world of spirits? As the Wisdom of Solomon speaketh, (Wisd. IX. 16.) "Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labor do we find the things that are before us; but the things
" that

“ that are in heaven who hath searched out ? ”
That there is a God is demonstrable by the light of nature ; that there are angels or spirits is probable from reason, is certain from revelation ; but who can frame to himself any adequate ideas of their ways and manner of existence ? Imagination may take her flight in this wide field, but like Noah’s dove will find no rest for the sole of her foot, and will return wearied and empty from the pursuit.

Since then we admit and must admit as true so many things which we cannot comprehend, how can we in reason make our not comprehending of a thing a ground for our rejecting of it as false ? Certainly many things are, and yet we cannot tell how they are. This we allow in every thing else and why not as well in religion ? This we admit in the works of God and why not as well in the words of God ? God was not obliged to make any revelation at all ; and much less was He obliged to make all things alike plain and easy in a revelation. The Father of lights may communicate light in what measure and proportion he pleases ; and surely it better becomes us to be thankful for that light we have, than obstinately to shut our eyes against it because it is not greater. In short mysteries are points of doctrine which we cannot comprehend, and consequently as we cannot know them to be true so neither can we know them to be false by the doctrines themselves ; but though we cannot know them to be

be true by themselves, yet we know them to be true by the truth of this infallible axiom; *Whatever God hath said must be true.* For these reasons I apprehend the mysteries of religion can be no objection to the truth of religion.

II. But we may be farther satisfied if we consider in the next place, that neither was it possible nor is it necessary that we should perfectly comprehend every thing in religion. It is not possible because we can have no knowledge farther than we have ideas; and in many things we can have but very imperfect ideas and in some none at all. The nature and attributes of God, the state and condition of angels and departed souls, the joys of heaven and the pains of hell; these and the like one would expect to be the topics of revelation, as they actually are: but how is it possible for finite to comprehend infinite? how can flesh and blood rightly apprehend what is spiritual and to be spiritually discerned? how can we in this world be raised and refined enough to have perfect ideas of the world to come? While we are men, we can think only as men, we can understand only as men. God in giving us a new revelation doth not also give us new capacities. When St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, neither could he himself express nor can we conceive what things he saw and heard there: All that we can say of them is they were such as it is “not lawful for a man
ed “ to

“ to utter, such as eye hath not seen nor ear
“ heard nor hath it entered into the heart of
“ man to conceive.” And when the scripture
speaketh of these things, it necessarily speaketh
after the manner of men (Rom. VI. 19.) “ be-
“ cause of the infirmities of our flesh,” repre-
senting spiritual objects under sensible corpo-
real images. Our eyes are too weak, and we
can no more bear the light of revelation than
the Jews could the brightness of Moses’s face
without a veil.

Such is our state in this world; but then
our comfort is that as this knowlege is not
possible to be attained, so neither is it necessary
to be attained. It would be hard indeed, if
any thing necessary to salvation was not reveal-
ed, or if we were obliged to believe more than
is revealed; but God is not such a rigid task-
master, he never denies his creatures necessa-
ries, he never requires brick without straw;
he hath revealed all that is necessary to salva-
tion, and we are not obliged to believe more
than is revealed. It is not necessary that we
should know the manner of the co-eternal
existence of the Son with the Father; it is
enough that we believe that (John I. 1.) “ in
“ the beginning was the Word, and the Word
“ was with God, and the Word was God.”
It is not necessary that we should know after
what manner the divine and human natures
were united in Christ, as neither do we know
how the soul and body are united in any man; it

is enough that we believe that as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ. It is not necessary that we should know the manner of the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son; it is enough that we believe that He proceedeth from the Father and the Son, and with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified. It is not necessary that we should know the particular nature and constitution of those bodies with which we shall rise at the resurrection; it is enough that we believe that we shall rise again, and (1 Cor. XV. 44.) "what was sown a *natural* body will be raised " a *spiritual* body." It is not necessary that we should know wherein particularly consists the happiness of the blessed or the misery of the damned; it is enough that we believe that (Matt. XXV. 46.) "the wicked shall go away " into everlasting punishment and the righteous into life eternal." This answers all the ends of religion and morality, the other would be the gratification of a needless curiosity. In a word, we have not the capacity to know all things, but we know enough and more than enough to be saved if we will be careful to frame our lives accordingly; and methinks it may content us that (John XIII. 17.) "if we " know these things happy are we if we do " them."

III. But we will advance a step farther, and argue not only that it is not possible nor necessary

cessary for us to comprehend all mysteries, but also that several reasons may be assigned why some things should remain mysteries to us in this world.—May not one reason be, as was hinted above, for the exercise and trial of our faith; for where would be faith, if all was knowledge, all was demonstration, all was certainty? May not some things be made plain in mercy to some and some again be made obscure in judgment to others, that they who see not may see, and that they who see may be made blind? It is certain there is light enough to enlighten the believers, and yet obscurity enough to try them: And on the other hand there is obscurity enough to blind the infidels, and yet light enough to leave them without excuse.—May not another reason be to create in us a religious awe and reverence? for such is the nature of man, that familiarity often breedeth contempt and distance begets reverence. The heathens had their religious mysteries, from which the profane vulgar were kept at a distance, and none were initiated but the best and greatest. There was nothing more revered by the Jews in their religion than the ark not to be touched, the holy of holies not to be entered: And the sun is never more gazed upon and admired than when he labors under an eclipse.—May not a farther reason be to humble the pride of human reason and make that the means of life the reverse of which was the means of death? The remedy is properly the

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contrary

contrary of the disease. Man fell from happiness at first by pride through a sense of his knowlege; and well is he restored to happiness again by humility through a sense of his ignorance, reverencing those sacred truths which he cannot comprehend, (2 Cor. X. 5.) “ casting down imaginations and every high thing
“ that exalteth itself against the knowlege of
“ God, and bringing into captivity every
“ thought to the obedience of Christ.”—May not still a farther reason be to engage our study and furnish inexhaustible matter for it? For men are apt to neglect what is easy to be understood, and study only what is attended with some difficulties. Now in scripture as there are obvious practical truths to direct our practice, so there are abstruse speculative truths to engage our speculation. It is in scripture as in nature. After all our inquiries there will still be room for farther inquiry; We may draw out of the ocean, but we can never draw it dry. The ablest divines, the greatest philosophers will come at last after all their discoveries to the conclusion of the son of Sirach, (Ecclus. XLIII. 32.) “ There are yet hid
“ greater things than these be, for we have
“ seen but a few.”—May not still a farther reason than all be to beget and nourish in us a desire and longing for that happy state where these mysteries may be cleared up, where faith may be lost in vision, and doubt may be swallowed up in certainty.

For

For IV. and lastly the fuller and more perfect comprehension of these things will make part of our happiness in the world to come. And surely then we can have no more reason to complain that we are ignorant of them now, than that earth is not heaven or that men are not angels. As this life is designed only for a state of probation, but the next for a state of reward; as we are to sojourn here only for a time, but there we are to continue for ever: we see the reason why our knowledge and happiness should be so much greater in the other world than in this. At present we are at a vast distance from those things which are such mysteries to us; but in the next world we shall have an intuitive knowledge of them. At present we converse only with men like ourselves; but in the next world we shall be in company with "angels and the spirits of just men made perfect" we ourselves also being made "perfect." At present this "earthly body presseth and weigheth down the mind that museth upon many things;" but in the next world "our bodies" will be like "Christ's glorious body," and will be so far from clogging and oppressing our speculations that they will rather assist and improve them. At present we "walk by faith," as St. Paul speaketh, (2 Cor. V. 7.) but in the next world we shall "walk by sight:" (1 Cor. XIII. 9, &c.) "Now we know in part and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come,

“ then that which is in part shall be done
 “ away : Now we see through a glass darkly,
 “ but then face to face : now we know in part,
 “ but then shall we know even as also we
 “ are known :” “ Beloved,” saith St. John,
 (1 John III. 2.) “ now are we the sons of
 “ God, and it doth not yet appear what we
 “ shall be ; but we know that when he shall
 “ appear we shall be like him, for we shall
 “ see him as he is.”

From what hath been discoursed upon this
 occasion we will only make a reflection or
 two. First on the folly of pretending to ex-
 plain mysteries, 2dly the wisdom of believing
 them.

1st. The folly of pretending to explain mys-
 teries ; for it is fathoming where there is no
 bottom, it is pretending to explain what is not
 to be explained, and the folly of such a pre-
 tence exposeth itself sufficiently. The ex-
 plainers of mysteries in divinity are if possible
 more ridiculous than their brothers in philo-
 sophy, the inventors of the philosophers stone,
 the squarers of the circle, and the discoverers
 of the longitude. Poor busy vain men, who
 take a great deal of pains, and promise great
 things, but all to no purpose ! For how can
 they ever be satisfied that they are in the right
 in their explication of a mystery ? It is infinity
 to unity that they are in the wrong ; for the
 truth can be but one but errors are without
 number and without end. And by the same
 reason

reason that one man offers one explication, another will offer another ; and every man and every Church being fond of their own are willing to impose it upon others : And so creeds are increased and articles are multiplied ; and because creeds and articles abound the love of many waxeth cold : And some not rightly distinguishing between the doctrine and the explication, between the doctrine of God and the explication of men, reject the former on account of the latter. The compilers of creeds and articles, of systems and bodies of divinity may think what they please, (Col. II. 18.) “ intruding into those things which they have “ not seen vainly put up by their fleshly “ minds :” but certainly there are no words to express the mysteries of religion like the words of the Holy Ghost. And this is what the Church of England hath prudently as well as piously observed, expressing herself generally in the words of scripture, or in such terms as are agreeable to it, or deducible from it.

2dly. The wisdom of believing mysteries ; for it is complying we see with the fitness and necessity of things, it is submitting human reason to infinite reason, and can any thing be more reasonable than such a submission ? Is it rational in cases of physic which we do not understand, to take the advice of skilful physicians ; is it rational in points of law which we do not understand, to abide by the opinion

of able lawyers ; is it rational to admit any demonstration in the mathematics which we do not understand upon the authority of the greatest mathematicians ; and is it not much more rational in things of divinity which we do not understand, in things spiritual, in things heavenly, to resign up our faith to him who is of infinite wisdom and therefore cannot be deceived, of infinite goodness and therefore cannot deceive. They who reject mysteries must yet admit other things more incredible more unaccountable : for it will ever be found true that the greatest infidels are the most credulous persons in the world. With all their boasted liberty they are the lowest and most abject of slaves ; with all their boasted reason there are more mysteries and absurdities too in the creed of a free-thinker than in the creed of the most bigotted Papist. What was said of the free-thinkers and free livers of former times is equally applicable to those of the present, (Rom. I. 22.) “ Professing themselves to be “ wise they become fools ; ” whereas to profess ourselves fools in comparison with God is the way to become truly wise. Such is the advice of the wisest of men, to put our trust and confidence in God, and not to rely on our own understandings ; and with his advice I will conclude, and let the wise attend to the wisest ; (Prov. III. 5, &c.) “ Trust in the “ Lord with all thine heart, and lean not to “ thine own understanding ; In all thy ways “ acknow-

“acknowledge him and he shall direct thy
“paths; Be not wise in thine own eyes, fear
“the Lord and depart from evil.”

DISSERTATION XXXVI.

On the long Life of St. JOHN.

OUR blessed Saviour had signified to St. Peter by what death he should glorify God. (John XXI. 18, 19.) “Verily verily I
“say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou
“girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou
“wouldest; but when thou shalt be old, thou
“shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another
“shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou
“wouldest not. This spake he, signifying by
“what death he should glorify God. And
“when he had spoken this, he saith unto him,
“Follow me.” It is here sufficiently intimated, that St. Peter should live to a good old age, but at length should come to a violent end; and the expressions of his “stretching forth his hands,” and being “girded by another,” and “following Christ,” seem to foretel what kind of martyrdom he should suffer, and that he should resemble Christ in
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the manner of his death as well as in his life. Accordingly it is related by ecclesiastical historians, that he was crucified at Rome in the persecutions under Nero between 30 and 40 years after the death of Christ; and at his own desire was crucified with his head downwards, that some difference might be made between him and his Lord and Master.

St. Peter having heard his own fate, was curious also to know that of the other apostle St. John, that disciple for whom Jesus always manifested an especial regard; (ver. 20, 21.) "Then Peter turning about seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following, which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said Lord Which is he that betrayeth thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord and what shall this man do?" To which our Saviour returns this answer, (ver. 22.) "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." There are two comings of Christ particularly mentioned in the gospels and epistles as still future, his coming to take vengeance upon the Jews, and his coming to judge the world: but this text cannot possibly be understood of his latter coming, and therefore it necessarily must of the former. It cannot be understood of the latter, because then St. John would never have died, and at the general resurrection would be "caught up alive in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air;" but this opinion he himself confutes in

in the verse immediately following (ver. 23.)
“ Then went this saying abroad among the
“ brethren, that that disciple should not die,
“ yet Jesus said not unto him He shall not die,
“ but If I will that he tarry till I come, what
“ is that to Thee?” And therefore, since it
cannot possibly be understood of his last coming
to judge the world, it necessarily must be
understood of his former coming to take vengeance
upon the Jews. So that our Saviour’s meaning
may be more fully expressed after this manner: “ If I will that he tarry till
“ I come,” If I will that he live till the
destruction of Jerusalem, “ What is that to
“ thee? follow thou me;” Repress thy vain
curiosity and do thy duty, take up thy cross
and follow me.

This I conceive to be the natural and obvious
sense of the words, and to common apprehension,
though they may not be a direct prophecy, yet they
are a strong intimation, that St. John should live
till the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dissolution
of the Jewish œconomy: and they were accordingly
verified in the event. “ There are some standing
here,” said our Saviour to his disciples, (Matt. XVI.
28.) “ who shall not taste of death, till they
“ see the Son of man coming in his kingdom:”
but it was hard to imagin that a person of such
eminence as St. John should be one of the number;
and considering the malice and bigotry of the
Jews on one side and the

the fury and persecutions of the Heathens on the other, it must be a signal act of providence to preserve the apostle in the midst of so many dangers, and could be effected only by him who hath the issues of life and death in his power. Nay St. John not only lived till the destruction of Jerusalem, but survived it many years during the reigns of the Roman Emperors, Vespasian, Titus, Domitian, Nerva, and is commonly supposed to have died in the second or third year of Trajan of extreme old age. It was somewhat wonderful, that he did not fall a sacrifice in the persecutions under Nero, as well as St. Peter and St. Paul: but his deliverance from Domitian is still more surprising. (1) Tertullian, a writer of good credit in the beginning of the third century, and one very well versed in the Roman affairs, informs us, that St. John was sent to Rome by order of Domitian, and was there put into a caldron of oil set on fire; but the rage of Domitian was frustrated like that of Nebuchadnezzar, and the same good providence, which delivered the three young men out of the fiery furnace, preserved St. John from the caldron of burning oil. Indeed the truth of this story hath been called in question: and it were to be wished that it had more vouchers if it be true, and if it be false, it is to be lamented that it hath any vouchers at all, and especially

(1) Tertull. de prescrip. Hæret. c. 36. p. 215. Edit. Rigaltii. Paris 1675.

a man of so great authority, whom (2) Eusebius affirms to be perfectly well skilled in the Roman laws, and most famous in other respects as a writer. All that we know with any degree of certainty is, that St. John was banished into Patmos, an island in the Archipelago, where he was favored with those heavenly visions, and wrote his Apocalyps or Revelation: but for reasons which have been assigned in the Analysis of the Revelation we suppose this was done in Nero's time rather than in Domitian's: and when he was advanced in years, he fixed his abode chiefly at Ephesus, and there lived and died in peace, as is generally believed, being near a hundred years old, but as some say much older.

Thus much may suffice to illustrate this passage of scripture and the prophecy contained in it. Give me leave now to make an observation or two from what has been said upon it.

1. I observe from hence the singular providence of God in thus preserving and extending the life of this apostle beyond the usual period of the life of man. Several apostolical men, as Simeon Bishop of Jerusalem, Ignatius Bishop of Antioch, and Polycarp Bishop of Smyrna, are observed to have lived to a very great age; and they might possibly have spun out the thred of life somewhat longer, had they not been violently cut off by martyrdom.

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(2) Euseb. Eccles. Hist. Lib. 2. Cap. 2. Edit. Valefi.

(3) Hieron.

The long life of these primitive men might in some measure be owing to their sober and temperate way of living; but no doubt it is to be ascribed principally to the gracious interposition of Almighty God, and was wisely contrived for the common good and benefit of Christianity—that the Churches might be settled under their auspicious care and direction—that any innovations or alterations in the faith might be prevented or remedied—and that the traditions of the apostles might be better preserved and delivered down from age to age. If the hand of providence be so visible in prolonging the lives of these apostolical men, how much more conspicuous is it in prolonging the life of an apostle himself? And of all the apostles this favor might be conferred upon St. John particularly, because he was our Lord's particular favorite. He and his brother James and Peter made up the triumvirate, that our Lord admitted into his privacies and honored with his more immediate friendship. Nay even of these St. John seemeth to have been the greatest confident, and to have had the first place in our Lord's esteem and affection. He is emphatically called the disciple "whom Jesus loved:" He was the man who sat next him at supper and reclined upon his breast: He was the man to whom St. Peter beckoned to ask our Lord Who would betray him: finally He was the man, to whom our Saviour, almost with his last breath, bequeathed the care of his mother.

So

So particular an affection had our Lord for St. John, hereby authorizing private friendship, and showing that it is no ways inconsistent with universal charity and love of the public. Now this seemeth to have been the reason of our Lord's particular affection for St. John. There was some resemblance and similitude in their temper and manners, and the original excellencies of the Master were not ill copied and transcribed by the disciple. His temper, I conceive, was naturally warm and ambitious; as we may infer from his desiring our Saviour to command fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, and from his joining with his brother in a petition to our Lord, that they might sit the one on his right hand and the other on his left in his kingdom: But religion seemeth to have got the better of nature, and to have changed his natural heat only into the more fervent zeal and charity. Indeed of all the apostles St. John seemeth to have come nearest to our Lord's character, and to have resembled him most in tenderness and sweetness of disposition. His writings breathe nothing but universal kindness and charity: this is the spirit that runneth through and animates them all: this was visible in every part of his behaviour and is still legible in every part of his writings. In all his discourses his main topic was the love that God bore to men and that men ought therefore to bear one to another: And when he was grown old, and age and natural infirmities had

had rendered him incapable of making long harangues, he was (3) wont to address himself to the Christian assemblies only in these words, "My dear children let us love one another:" and being asked why he repeated the same thing so often, he made answer This is the command I received of the Lord Jesus, and if we do this we need do nothing else. Such was the divine temper of this blessed apostle, and might in an especial manner recommend him to the favor and affection of a master who was love itself. Even in the natural way the greatest preservative of health is a serene even temper: no regimen for long life like generosity and good nature; they are wonderful nourishers of the spirits and nourished by them again: whereas ill nature and envy and all the passions of the harsher kind strangely prey upon the vitals, and are the worst sort of consumption. (Matt. V. 5.) "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth," was one of our Saviour's beatitudes, and as we have seen was remarkably verified in the case of St. John.

But the life of this apostle was prolonged not so much for his own sake, as for the sake of the Church; and the blessing was not confined to himself, but extended to the whole body of Christians. Several of the primitive writers speak of St. John as an excellent Church-governor, as one indefatigable in mak-

ing.
(3) Hieron. Comm. ad Galat. Cap. 6. Tom. 4. p. 314. Edit. Benedict.

(4) Euseb.

ing new converts to Christianity, and confirming those already made: and his concern for the Churches of Asia in particular, all of his own planting or at least cultivating, is still to be seen in his seven epistles addressed to the seven angels or governors. He was a living oracle to all his contemporaries, a standard to which all might appeal, a criterion by which all might be tried: and of what weight and authority in controverted points must be the judgment and decision of a man who had personally conversed with our Saviour, and not only personally conversed with him but was an apostle, and not only was an apostle but the favorite apostle and the disciple whom "Jesus loved?" Certainly such a man was a public blessing to the first century: and he was not only of service to the church while he was living, but "being dead he still speaketh." His writings are a fund and treasure house of all divinity: and to his long life we are indebted for these invaluable remains, being most of them written by him in his old age. His stile itself, in his gospel and in his epistles, favors something of the primitive old man: there is the *lene et temperatum dicendi genus* the gentle and temperate way of speaking, the mildness and maturity that is in a manner proper and peculiar to old age. Ecclesiastical historians (4) assure us, that St. John perused the three other

(4) Euseb. Eccl. Hist. Lib. 3. Cap. 24.

other gospels and confirmed them with his approbation; and then, at the request of the Bishops of Asia, composed his own gospel, partly to record some transactions which were omitted by the other evangelists, and partly as an antidote to some heresies which were then springing up in the Church. His first epistle was anciently inscribed to the Parthians, and therefore he is reasonably supposed to have preached the gospel as far as Parthia; and according to his usual modesty he conceals his name in all his epistles, and stileth himself only "the Elder," probably in allusion to his great age. His Apocalyps or book of the Revelation was written by him during his confinement in the island of Patmos, and is the first in time, though last in order of all his writings. Indeed this prophecy, like most other prophecies, hath something in it very obscure; but what is perplexed and difficult now may be cleared up and made easy hereafter, when the particulars shall be accomplished and men have the events before their eyes to compare with the prediction; and in the mean time though many things are very hard to be understood, yet many again are very plain, and doubtless (Rev. I. 3.) "blessed is he that readeth and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein." It is needless to recommend the books of St. John to those Christians, who daily peruse them with delight and improvement.

ment. Only let it be observed that the ancients compared him to an *eagle* for the sublime mysteries he treateth, and gave him by way of eminence above all the other apostles the name of the *Divine*. Even Heathen philosophers have expressed their admiration of his works, and what then must be the opinion and sentiments of us Christians? It is well remarked by (5) one, that Peter was an apostle but properly no evangelist; Mark an evangelist but no apostle; St. Matthew an apostle and evangelist but no prophet; but St. John was an apostle, an evangelist, and a prophet. We see of what use and importance was the long life of St. John, and particularly had it not been for that we should in all probability never have enjoyed his divine writings. St. John was a blessing to the Church not only in himself but likewise in his disciples and scholars, such as Ignatius, Polycarp, and others, all of them men famous and useful in their generation: And the longer he lived, the more proselytes he might gain, the more scholars instruct, found the more Churches, constitute the more Bishops, obviate the more heresies, and fulfilling the greater work of the ministry here obtain the larger share of bliss and glory hereafter.

2. I observe that we may from hence deduce a very good argument against the Pope's supremacy. Several ways there are of overthrow-

(5) Dr. Cave.

ing this reverend tyranny, this spiritual usurpation, as you may see particularly in Dr. Barrow's most learned treatise upon this subject: but here we are furnished with an argument drawn from ecclesiastical story and plain matter of fact. If the doctrine of the Romanists in this point be true, then, after the death of St. Peter, Linus or Clemens or whoever he was that succeeded him, became supreme head and governor of the Church: but we have shown before, and it is agreed on all hands, that St. John survived St. Peter many years; and was it not then very strange that another should be constituted head of the Church in exclusion of an apostle himself? What? was Linus superior to St. John, and must the apostle submit to the jurisdiction of one who was no apostle? Supposing St. Peter had the supremacy and that supremacy descended, how came it to descend to a private person rather than to a brother apostle and the apostle too "whom Jesus "loved?" Certainly while St. John was living, the Bishop of Rome could not be head of the Church; and I would fain know how he came by that right and title, after St. John was dead? The farther one pursues this argument the more it appears that the papal supremacy is a monstrous imposition upon latter ages. Much may be said in opposition to it from scripture and from reason, and here too we have produced against it historical evidence and undeniable matter of fact.

Lastly

Lastly I observe from hence that we should not be too curious and inquisitive into abstruse matters, but rather take care to do our duty in those plainer instances which are commanded. When any curious question was proposed to our Saviour, he never returned a direct answer, but always took occasion from thence to raise some moral instruction. Thus when one inquired of him concerning the number of those who shall be saved, (Luke XIII. 23.) "Lord are there few that be saved?" he did not satisfy him how many would be saved, but bade all his hearers to take care to be of the number, be it more or be it less: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate, for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able." In like manner when his disciples asked him, (Matt. XVIII. 1.) "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" instead of naming the person as they expected, he called a little child unto him and set him in the midst of them and said, "Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." In the particular instance now under consideration, our blessed Saviour, we see, would not gratify the needless curiosity of one of the chiefest apostles, but bade him leave the event of things to providence, and "follow him:" And what

he said to St. Peter, he saith to every man in all cases of the like nature, "What is that to thee? follow thou me." Whatever God has concealed, whatever he has commanded, there are without doubt infinitely the wisest reasons both for the one and the other; and we can never be too incurious concerning the former, nor too diligent to fulfil and execute the latter. This prying inquisitive temper, like a craving appetite, is uneasy and painful to itself: but the road of duty is plain and easy; to know it is wisdom, to pursue it is happiness; (John XIII. 17.) "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Curiosity not only giveth constant pain, but meeteth also with perpetual disappointment; it would comprehend all mysteries, explain all revelations, and so is ever seeking and yet never satisfied, "ever learning and yet never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:" but the doing of our duty cannot fail of attaining its end; it is the true spring and source of self-satisfaction; (Prov. XIV. 14.) "a good man shall be satisfied from himself;" and goodness (1 Tim. IV. 8.) "hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Besides the love of novelty betrays a man into a thousand inconveniences and dangers; for how many vain projectors have starved? how many pretending to be wise above what is written, have proved downright heretics at last? "They spent their time in nothing else but
" either

“ either to tell or to hear some new thing” (Acts XVII. 21.) was the character of the Athenians, and few of them we find had the grace to embrace the gospel. The curious man searcheth into things above his sphere, and so professing himself wise becomes a fool: but every man hath it in his power, if he hath it but in his inclination, to be good, and to be good is to be truly wise, “ wise unto salvation.” This curiosity was forbidden, and proved fatal to our first parents; for eating of the tree of knowlege they forfeited their title to immortality or the tree of life.

To conclude. If a man would every now and then ask himself this question, This that I am doing, this that I am thinking, is it my duty, is it my business, what good will it do to men, or what glory will redound from it to God? I say if a man would lay his hand on his heart, and seriously ask himself this question, it would prevent a great deal of vanity and folly in the world. All other things are impertinence compared with our duty: this in the first place we must take care to discharge, ever remembering our Saviour’s reproof of the inquisitive disciple “ What is that to thee? follow thou me.” (Deut. XXIX. 29.) “ Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of the law.”

DISSERTATION XXXVII.

On St. PAUL's Eloquence.

IT was the good pleasure of Almighty God in the preaching and propagation of the gospel, to make use of such instruments as were by no means naturally fitted for it, men of low parentage and education, of low employments and occupations, of no learning or eloquence, of no power or authority, of no repute or influence in the world. He "hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes," that "no flesh might glory in his presence," that the work might the more evidently appear to be his own, and his own be therefore all the glory. But yet that human learning might not seem to be totally reprobated and rejected from having any share in the gospel, that science and true religion might not be thought any ways inconsistent, but capable each of promoting and improving and adorning the other, St. Paul was added to the number of the twelve apostles, (Galat. I. 1.) "an apostle not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." He was also

also designed to be the great preacher and apostle to the Gentiles, which made it the more requisite for him to know something of men and manners, to be master of some erudition and learning, to be conversant with the best Greek authors, and well acquainted with the theology and philosophy of the heathen nations, as he plainly appears to have been in several parts of his discourses and writings.

Now it may be truly affirmed of St. Paul, that he was not improperly chosen for these great purposes. For he was of honorable descent, (Phil. III. 5.) being "of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, as touching the law a Pharisee." He was a native of Tarsus (Acts XXI. 39.) "a city of Cilicia, a citizen of no mean city." He was besides a citizen of Rome, as some conceive, by virtue of his birth at Tarsus, or as others suppose, by privilege derived from his parents; and as Saul was his Hebrew, so Paul was his Roman name, (Acts XIII. 9.) "Saul who also is called Paul." At Tarsus, as we learn from (1) Strabo, there were at that time famous schools of literature superior even to those of Athens and Alexandria; so that he might have the advantages of a liberal education from his early youth, and without doubt he then first contracted his taste and relish for the Greek poets, of whom in his advanced

(1) Strab, Lib, 14. p. 291, Edit, Amstel. 1707.

(2) Strab.

vanced years he still retained so much as to make quotations from them. At the same time, as it was the custom among the Jews for every one of whatever rank or condition he might be, to learn some manual trade or operation, he was trained up to the business and occupation of a tent-maker, a profitable business in countries where they lived so much in tents whether in peace or in war. From Tarsus he went to Jerusalem to complete his education, and to be farther instructed in the knowlege of the law; and there he studied under the learned Gamaliel, one of the most famous of the Jewish doctors, and a member of the great council, who made that wise and moderate speech, which is recorded in the Vth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; "and to him they agreed." St. Paul is said (Acts XXII. 3.) to have been "brought up at the feet of Gamaliel;" for it was the manner in the Jewish academies for the master to sit above, and for the scholars or auditors to stand around beneath. Under such a master he made uncommon proficiency, and as he said himself (Gal. I. 14.) "profited in the Jews' religion above many his equals in his own nation." Besides his natural abilities and acquired learning, if our Saviour's promise (Luke XXI. 15.) "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist" was ever fulfilled in any of his disciples, it was certainly to the fullest extent in St. Paul. He was called
in

in an extraordinary manner to be an apostle, and we may suppose therefore would be blessed with extraordinary indowments: and it happens very providentially, that we have more of his writings remaining, and know more of his acts and discourses, than of any other of the apostles, St. Luke having been his companion and fellow-traveler, who was bred a physician, and was himself also a man of good learning and abilities.

The talent of speaking is one thing, and that of writing is another; and we have known several persons eminent in the one, and yet strangely deficient in the other: but this apostle was excellent in both; and whether we consider him as an orator or an author, we shall find few or none to equal or exceed him. The effects of his eloquence which are upon record are really surprising; and yet his person by all accounts of it was no recommendation or ornament to his oratory; for it is said of him (2 Cor. X. 10.) that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." His infirmity, whatever it was, he himself calleth (2 Cor. XII. 7.) "a thorn in the flesh," which according to ancient tradition was a violent headach or some bodily disease, which was a disadvantage both to his appearance and to his delivery, and might hinder his success in preaching the gospel. A very indifferent discourse may affect us set off with a handsome person and graceful elocution; but where these
requisites

requisites are wanting, and we are still affected, the discourse must be admirable indeed; the one is only the speaker's happiness, the other is his merit and excellence. It was then more St. Paul's matter than manner that made such impression, and had such surprising effects: and certainly there is no where finer insinuation and address, no where greater compass of thought and force of reasoning, no where a stronger torrent of words, more exuberance of matter and more variety of style, than in all his speeches and writings.

It was in the road near to Damascus that he was called in that wonderful manner to the apostleship, and the first fruits of his conversion were almost as miraculous as his conversion itself. (Acts IX. 19—22.) For within a few days he preached Christ in the synagogues at Damascus to the surprise and astonishment of all who heard him, that he who so cruelly persecuted the Church, and came thither from Jerusalem for that very purpose, should of a sudden become so brave a champion for the Christian religion. “But Saul increased the more in strength, and confounded the Jews which dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.”

Paul and Barnabas having been separated for the great work of preaching the gospel to the Gentiles, besides other places came to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia in the lesser Asia. (Acts XIV. 6—22.) Now the Lycaonians were gross idolaters,

idolaters, and little better than barbarians, as the Greek (2) geographers Ephorus and Strabo represent most of the inland nations of the lesser Asia to be. Such persons are apt to be struck and affected more with signs and wonders than with reasons and arguments; and Paul therefore at his first preaching among them very seasonably and fitly confirms his doctrine by a signal miracle. For seeing "a certain man, impotent in his feet, a cripple from his mother's womb," very attentive to him, convinced by his discourse, and ready to embrace and profess the faith, he "said with a loud voice, Stand upright on thy feet:" and no sooner was the word spoken than the man with sudden energy "leaped and walked." At the sight of this miracle "the people lifted up their voices," but not within hearing of the apostles, saying in the language of the Lycaonians, "The gods are come down to us in the likeness of men." They believed all the fabulous stories in the poets of the gods descending upon earth in human forms, and conversing with men: and they took "Barnabas" for "Jupiter," being the elder and probably the more august and venerable personage, and "Paul" for "Mercury" the god of eloquence, "because he was the chief speaker. Then the priest of Jupiter, which was before their city," his temple being without the city, "brought

(2) Strab. Lib. 14. p. 996. Edit. Amstel. 1707.

(3) Chrysost.

"brought oxen and garlands," oxen crowned
 with garlands, "and would have done sacri-
 fice with the people." As soon as the
 apostles were aware of their intention, "they
 rent their cloaths and ran in among them
 crying out, Sirs, why do ye these things?
 we also are men of like passions with you,"
 we are subject to the same diseases and infir-
 mities as you are, and the purport of our
 preaching is to turn you from "these vani-
 ties," from the worship of vain idols to
 serve the living and true God. Their discourse
 is admirably adapted to their auditors; they
 derive their arguments from no higher source
 than natural religion, and insist only upon the
 plain and obvious topics of *creation* and *provi-
 dence*. The works of creation are a demon-
 stration of the being of God, "the living
 God who made heaven and earth and the
 sea, and all things that are therein. In times
 past he suffered all nations," all the heathens
 to walk in their own ways," without any
 particular revelation of himself as to the people
 of Israel. But yet his general providence af-
 forded ample proofs of his power and good-
 ness: "Nevertheless he left not himself with-
 out witness, in that he did good, and gave
 us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons,
 filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 These arguments are as forcible as they are
 plain and obvious to the meanest capacity; He
 is the creator and preserver of us and all things,

he is the author and giver of all the good that we enjoy, and he therefore is the only proper and adequate object of our worship. The people were so transported, that "with these sayings scarce restrained they them that they had not done sacrifice unto them." But such is the fickleness and uncertainty of the multitude, that him whom they were now for worshipping as a god, soon after at the instigation of certain Jews, they suffered to be "stoned, and drawn out of the city, supposing he had been dead." Howbeit the apostles had sown some good seeds among them, for we read that within a little time they "returned again to Lystra, confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting to continue in the faith."

Our apostle's conduct and behaviour among the learned and polite Athenians (Acts XVII. 16—34.) we shall find to be somewhat different from what it was to the rude and illiterate Lycaonians, but both of equal fitness and propriety. He did not open his commission at Athens in the same manner as at Lystra, by working a miracle. There were without doubt several cripples at Athens, for such cases abounded in that climate, as Dr. Bentley, who hath admirably well expounded this whole discourse of the apostle in the introduction to one of his Boyle's lectures, remarks from Lucretius, who learned it probably from his master Epicurus, a native of Athens,

"Atthide

"Atthide tentantur gressus, oculique in Achæis
 "Finibus," Lib. 6:

but it doth not appear that any of them had the good disposition of the cripple at Lystra, or "faith to be healed." And besides the Greeks did not so much "require a sign," (1 Cor. I. 22.) as "seek after wisdom." Accordingly we find the apostle "disputing" not only "in the synagogue with the Jews and with" the the Jewish proselytes "the devout persons," but likewise in the forum "in the market" "daily with them that met with him." Some of the philosophers also, particularly "of the" "Epicureans and of the Stoics, encountered" "him," some treating him as a "babler" or idle prating fellow, others looking upon him as a "setter forth" *ἑνὸν δαίμονιον* "of strange" "gods." Part of the accusation against Socrates was of the same nature, that he brought in *καὶ νέα δαίμονια* *new gods*: and how doth he refute the charge? He denies it, and declares in the most solemn manner before his judges, that he worshipped only the gods of his country, and in the same manner upon the same altars and with the same sacrifices as his country worshipped them. We shall see presently, how much more heroically and more philosophically St. Paul acquitted himself upon the like occasion, and what an abler champion of the truth and better teacher of righteousness he was

was than the brightest luminary of the heathen world. "He seemed to be a setter-forth of "strange gods, because he preached unto them "Jesus and the resurrection." But why *strange gods* in the plural number? They could not, as some have imagined, have taken the *resurrection* for a *goddess*, because the word was in common use among them, and they had some idea of the thing, of a man after death coming to life again. He preached *only Jesus* and the resurrection in consequence of him: but such a change of number is familiar in all authors and in all languages; as St. Matthew and St. Mark said that *the thieves* who were crucified with Jesus reviled him, when it is certain from St. Luke that only *one* of them did so. We have another instance also just below, "as "certain of your own poets have said," when only *one* poet, Aratus, is expressly quoted. All together they bring the apostle unto "Mars- "hill" or "Areopagus," the place of judicature and of the greatest resort in all the city, and with the curiosity natural to the Athenians request him to give an account of his new doctrine. What a glorious scene was here for the manifestation of the truth before such a promiscuous and numerous assembly of citizens and strangers, of philosophers of all sects, and people of all conditions: And with what exquisite skill and contrivance is every part and member of his discourse so framed and accommodated, as to obviate some principal error

and prejudice in some party or other of his hearers! Most of the false notions both of their vulgar and philosophical religion are here exposed and refuted. If there was nothing else remaining, yet this sufficiently testifies how great a master he was in the learning of the Greeks. Most of the fundamental truths both of natural and revealed religion are here opened and explained; and all within the compass of very few verses. From an altar with an inscription "to the unknown God," and that there were altars at Athens with such an inscription we have the attestation of several ancient heathen authors, he taketh occasion to reprove them for their great plurality of gods, and "him whom they ignorantly worshipped" to declare unto them." It might be contrary to the laws of Athens for any one to recommend and introduce a *new* or *strange* god; but he could not well be subject to the penalty of the law only for declaring him whom they already worshipped without knowing him. The opportunity was fair, and he improves it to the greatest advantage. He brancheth out his discourse into several particulars.—That "God" made the world and all things therein:" Which proposition though agreeable enough to the general belief and opinion, was yet directly contrary both to the Epicureans and to the Peripatetics; the former of whom attributed the formation of the world to the fortuitous concourse of atoms without any intervention

vention of the deity, and the latter maintained that the world was not created at all, and that all things had continued as they now are from all eternity.—“ That seeing he is Lord of
“ heaven and earth, he dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped
“ with mens hands, as though he needed any
“ thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath
“ and all things :” Which was leveled not so much against the philosophers as against the popular religion of Athens ; for the philosophers seldom or never sacrificed unless in compliance with the custom of their country, and even the Epicureans themselves admitted the self-sufficiency of the Godhead : but the people believed very absurdly that there were local gods, that the deity notwithstanding his immensity might be confined within temples, and notwithstanding his all-sufficiency was fed with the fat and fumes of sacrifices, as if he could really stand in need of any sustenance, who “ giveth to all life and breath and all
“ things.”—That “ he hath made of one
“ blood all nations of men for to dwell on all
“ the face of the earth, and hath determined
“ the times before appointed, and the bounds
“ of their habitation :” Which was not only opposed to the Epicureans who derived the beginning of human race from the mere effects of matter and motion, and to the Peripatetics or Aristotelians who denied mankind to have any beginning at all having subsisted in
S 2 eternal

eternal successions; but was moreover opposed to the general pride and conceit of the people of Athens, who boasted themselves to be Aborigines, to be descended from none other stock or race of men, but to be themselves originals and natives of their own country. — That “ they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, though he be not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being:” Which fundamental truth with the greatest propriety and elegance he confirms by a quotation from one of their own poets, Aratus, the Cilician, his own countryman, who lived above three hundred years before, and in whose astronomical poem this hemistich is still extant. “ As certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.” An evident proof that he knew how to illustrate divinity with the graces of classical learning, and was no stranger to a taste and politeness worthy of an Attic audience, — That “ forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art and man's device:” Which was plainly pointed at the gross idolatry of the lower people, who thought the very idols themselves to be gods, and terminated their worship in them. — That “ the times of this ignorance God winked at” or overlooked; as he said before to the people of Lystra, “ In former

“ former times God suffered all nations to
“ walk in their own ways; but now com-
“ mandeth all men every where to repent:”
Which doctrine of the necessity of repentance
must have been very mortifying to the pride
and vanity of the philosophers, and especially
of the Stoics, whose wise man was equal if
not superior to God himself.—“ Because he
“ hath appointed a day in the which he will
“ judge the world in righteousness by that
“ man whom he hath ordained, whereof he
“ hath given assurance unto all men, in that
“ he hath raised him from the dead:” Till now
they had heard him with silence and attention,
because though every period of his discourse
glanced at some of his hearers, yet it fell in
with the notions of others, and he had not
before touched and offended all together: but
“ when they heard of the resurrection of the
“ dead, some mocked,” the Epicureans and
the men of wit and pleasure, “ and others
“ said,” the Platonists and the graver sort of
his audience, “ We will hear thee again of
“ this matter,” putting it off to a more con-
venient season. “ So Paul departed from
“ among them,” leaving them as they deserved
to themselves. “ Howbeit certain men clave
“ unto him, and believed;” a diminutive ex-
pression to signify that he made but very few
converts; among whom the principal were
“ Dionysius the Areopagite,” who is said to
have been afterwards constituted the first bishop

of Athens, "and a woman named Damaris," some say his wife, but being mentioned distinctly and by name, I should rather suppose she had no relation to him. His success upon the whole was very inconsiderable among the Athenians, and we do not read that he ever returned to visit them again, as he did the inhabitants of Lystra.

Paul had arrived at Miletus, and "hasting, "if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost," he had not time to take Ephesus in his way; and therefore sent his summons thither for the elders of the church to attend him at Miletus. (Acts XX. 16—38.) This was, as I may say, his last visitation; and he taketh his leave of them in the most noble and generous, in the most cordial and affectionate manner. Conscious of his own integrity, he appeals to them as witnesses of his behaviour from his first coming into Asia; how he had "served the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears," and many trials and "temptations" through the insidious malice of the Jews; how he had preached the word among them with the utmost sincerity; had concealed no profitable truth, but had freely and openly communicated every thing of moment, pressing equally upon Jews and Gentiles the necessity of "repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." He had a strong impulse of the spirit to go to Jerusalem, without knowing particularly

particularly what might befall him there; only this he knew in general, that "bonds and afflictions" were to be his lot and portion in every city: "but I make account of nothing," says he with the courage of an apostle and martyr, "I make account of nothing, neither hold I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." He plainly foresaw, and was fully persuaded in his own mind, that after this time they "should see his face no more;" and therefore he called them "to record that he was pure from the blood of all men;" if any perished, it was through their own fault; "for he had not shunned to declare unto them all the counsel of God." As he should never have another opportunity of seeing them, he charges them in the first place to be careful of their own behaviour, and then to be faithful and diligent in their pastoral office, in "feeding all the flock," which Christ had purchased with his own blood, and which the Holy Ghost had committed to their care: And this caution was the more necessary, because he foresaw dangers would arise both from without and from within; from Judaizing false apostles, who should "enter in among them," and grievously vex and harass the church; and from false teachers, heretics and schismatics, who should "arise among themselves," and

advance perverse and strange doctrines " to
" draw away disciples after them. There-
" fore watch, and remember that by the space
" of three years I ceased not to warn every
" one night and day with tears." He then
concludes with " commending them to God
" and to the word of his grace," as the surest
means of edification here, and the firmest founda-
tion of happiness hereafter. But in the
conclusion with all his tenderness and concern
for them, he still professes his own disinterest-
edness. He had " coveted no man's silver or
" gold or apparel." He had not so much as
insisted upon that most just and equitable rule,
that " they who preach the gospel should live
" of the gospel." He had even wrought with
his own hands, that he might " minister to
" his own necessities, and to them who were
" with him:" and he had frequently exhorted
them to the like labor of love and charity, and
ever to bear in mind the memorable saying of
the Lord Jesus, " It is more blessed to give
" than to receive;" which saying is not re-
corded in any of the gospels, but was delivered
down by tradition, and at that time was well
known and remembered among Christians.
He finished his charge with " kneeling down
" and praying with them all." This is pro-
perly a *charge to the clergy*; and surely there
never was a more excellent one, for therein all
along as we have seen, the heart speaketh in
every word; and the resolution and firmness
on

on his side raised the greater tenderness and compassion on theirs. What answer could they return to so generous and pathetic a valediction, but what they did? "They all wept fore, and fell on Paul's neck, and kissed him." No wonder they melted into tears who were present at so moving a scene, for at this distance we can hardly refrain our tears in reading it. They were much affected by every part of his discourse, but "sorrowed most of all for the words which he had spoken that they should see his face no more." However they were desirous to attend him as long as they could, and showed their last respects by "accompanying him unto the ship."

When Paul came to Jerusalem, he was in imminent danger of his life; and being brought before the council, he made use of an innocent stratagem to sow dissension among his enemies, and thereby for himself to escape their fury. (Acts XXIII. 6—9.) For perceiving the council to consist partly of Pharisees and partly of Sadducees, he cried out among them, "Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." His words are expressive of the general resurrection, but refer particularly to the resurrection of Jesus and of the dead in consequence of his resurrection. This little artifice was attended with the desired success, for the Sadducees denying a resurrection and spirit,

spirit, and the Pharisees asserting both, there immediately arose a great dissension between them, to such a degree that his most powerful prosecutors became his strongest advocates, "the Scribes that were of the Pharisees part" contending for him and saying, "We find no evil in this man, but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God." A manifest and undeniable argument, that it is lawful to make use of all innocent means for our preservation, and that the apostle was no visionary or enthusiast, but knew how with the wisdom of the serpent to defend the innocence of the dove.

What a handsome apology doth he make for himself before King Agrippa? (Acts XXVI.) With what art and insinuation doth he begin! "I think myself happy, King Agrippa, because I shall answer for myself this day before thee touching all the things whereof I am accused of the Jews: Especially, because I know thee to be expert in all customs and questions which are among the Jews. Wherefore I beseech thee to hear me patiently." With what a beautiful turn and address doth he conclude! "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." The King himself cannot but acknowledge the superior force of his reason and eloquence. "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Every body must be charmed

charmed with the spirit and good manners of the apostle, the decency and delicacy of his answer; "I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds." King Agrippa and the new Roman governor Festus, upon hearing the whole, agreed that he had "done nothing worthy of death or of bonds," and that he might have been set at liberty if he had not appealed unto Cæsar," an inferior officer having not the power to dismiss an appeal to a superior magistrate, especially to the emperor.

Thus much may suffice for his *discourses*. And for his *epistles*, what a treasure of divinity and morality is there! with what force of argument and expression are the doctrinal points discussed in the body of each epistle! with what artless magnificence, better than all the quaint and studied elegance, are the moral precepts heaped together in the conclusion? He disclaims (1 Cor. II. 4.) "the enticing words of man's wisdom." Rhetoric was no part of his business or design; and yet perhaps there are some strains of rhetoric to be found in his writings equal to any in the finest writers whatever. His very enemies, who said (2 Cor. X. 10.) that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible," yet could not help owning that "his letters were weighty and powerful."

Is there any thing in any of the heathen moralists comparable to that fine description of charity in the XIIIth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians? "Speaking with the tongues of men and of angels" is nothing in comparison of charity; and "the tongues of men and of angels" can never exceed this description. All the powers of logic and rhetoric are to be seen and felt in the XVth chapter of the same epistle; and what solemnity doth it add to the most solemn service of our liturgy, *the burial of the dead!* We may perceive the apostle's fondness for the Greek poets by an instance in this chapter; for even in this great and important argument he citeth a verse out of a Greek comedian. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Milton in his preface to Samson Agonistes saith, it is a verse of Euripides: but it is still extant among the fragments of Menander, p. 79. of Le Clerc's edition. It is not impossible that such a moral sentence might become proverbial among the poets.

Is any epistle in Tully or Pliny wrought up with so moving address as that short one to Philemon? Every word hath its force and propriety. With what dignity and authority doth he entreat, though a prisoner! with what condescension and humility doth he command, though an apostle! For the fuller comprehension and juster sense of the many beauties of this composition, I would recommend to your

perusal a most excellent sermon of Bishop Smalrige, which is a judicious and elegant commentary on this epistle. Then peruse the XXIst epistle of the 9th book of Pliny, which is written much upon the same subject; and you will find it cold and flat and insipid upon the comparison. Pliny would fain say something, the apostle hath urged every thing that can be said with propriety upon the occasion. Pliny is too affected to be affecting; the apostle will take possession of your heart, and move your compassion whether you will or not.

But it is impossible to particularize all the fine passages in St. Paul's discourses and writings. We might as well pretend to number all the stars in the galaxy. Read him but attentively (for indeed he requires an attentive reader) and here he will convince your reason, there he will engage your affections; now awaken your fears, now inflame your hopes; now astonish, now transport you; and command all your passions, as a masterly hand sinketh into the strings of a well-tuned instrument. It is true (2 Pet. III. 16.) there are "some things" in him "hard to be understood:" and are there not obscure passages in Plato and the best authors Greek or Roman? The faults of St. Paul's writings are faults on the best side. He studied the matter more than the phrase, the sense more than the sound. Where he is obscure, he is generally obscure,

as

as I may say, through too much brightness, having more ideas than words; whereas the common fault of writers is, that they have more words than ideas.

What can be the end and result of such a discourse as this, but that we should diligently read and frequently meditate on our apostle's Acts and Epistles. You may perceive by this imperfect sketch, that he is very deserving of our time and attention, considered not only as an apostle, but even as an author. As he had a more learned education than any other of the apostles, so he labored more abundantly than they all. As his writings are larger, so they are likewise better, and exceed in weight as well as in number. He may not improperly be called a *sacred classic*; and if Longinus an eminent heathen critic could rank Paul of Tarsus among the most famous orators, we Christians surely may with the best reason study and esteem his writings; and the more we study, the more we shall esteem them. We might with the Christian mentioned by (3) St. Chrysostom demonstrate St. Paul to be a more logical and eloquent writer than Plato. But this was his least and lowest praise; his greatest merit consisted not in his "excellency" of speech or of wisdom, (1 Cor. II. 4, 5.)

(3) Chrysost. Hom. 3. in 1 Epist. ad Corinthios. Tom. 10. p. 20. Edit. Benedict.

but

but in demonstration of the Spirit and of
“ power, That our faith should not stand in
“ the wisdom of men, but in the power of
“ God.”

DISSERTATION XXXVIII.

St. PAUL before FELIX.

ONE of the three things, which St. Austin is said to have wished for, was to have seen St. Paul in the pulpit. And if such a wish could take effect, and one might have heard that great apostle speaking upon any occasion, there is not perhaps any more important and more affecting, than one would sooner choose to have been witness to, than his discourses before the Roman governor Felix. (Acts XXIV.) St. Paul was now at Cæsarea, the Roman governor's usual place of residence, a prisoner on account of a prosecution of the Jews. As soon as the high-priest and his other accusers were come down from Jerusalem, he was called forth: and a certain orator

tor named Tertullus opened the charge against him. But in what a fulsome strain of flattery doth this corrupt orator address this corrupt and flagitious governor; (ver. 2, 3.) “ Seeing
“ that by thee we enjoy great quietness, and
“ that very worthy deeds are done unto this
“ nation by thy providence, We accept it all-
“ ways and in all places, most noble Felix,
“ with all thankfulness !” In what a different manner, and much more just and decent, doth St. Paul begin his defense; (ver. 10.) “ For-
“ asmuch as I know that thou hast been of
“ many years a judge unto this nation, I do
“ the more chearfully answer for myself !” He disdains to ingratiate himself at the expense of truth, and with great openness and plainness refutes every article of the charge against him. However Felix still detained him a prisoner at large, for a farther hearing and examination, when Lyfias the chief captain should come down from Jerusalem to give testimony concerning him. In the mean time Felix went for his wife; (ver. 24.) “ and after certain
“ days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul,
“ and heard him concerning the faith in
“ Christ.” What a remarkable scene must this have been, the apostle giving an account of his faith to the governor who was a Heathen, and to his wife who was a Jewess. It is not expressly said that Drusilla was present, but it is implied, for otherwise her name would
would

would hardly have been introduced into so succinct a narration; he would hardly have been brought upon the stage only to disappear again. Bernice with Agrippa "entered into " the place of hearing" (Acts XXV. 23.) and why not Drusilla with Felix? The governor sent for Paul, we may presume, not out of any religious principle or with intention to be persuaded if he was convinced; but out of covetousness. "hoping that money should have " been given him of Paul that he might loose " him," or out of a spirit of curiosity to hear what this apologist could offer in behalf of an odd sect which was now beginning to make some noise in the world. But people's curiosity is not always gratified; they may chance to pay dearly for it; they do not always hear what they would, but sometimes what they would not; and there may be some truth to cut them to the quick, where perhaps they least expect it. Such seemeth to have been the case with Felix; for (ver. 25.) " as Paul " reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and " judgment to come, Felix trembled." Instead of the prisoner's trembling before his judge, the judge trembles before his prisoner, the great Roman governor before a poor tent-maker! A very extraordinary occurrence this! and we may consider it partly as the effect of St. Paul's eloquence, and partly as the effect of remorse of conscience in Felix: and in either view it will furnish us with several not

unedifying nor unuseful reflections. "Felix trembled."

I. We may consider it in the 1st place partly as the effect of *St. Paul's eloquence*. For without doubt the same truths from every mouth would not have been equally affecting. Few could have thundered and lightened like St. Paul so to have struck and confounded their judge. The story saith that "he reasoned." What he spoke was not a florid empty declamation, but abounded with argument and good sense; he did not only assert, but proved what he asserted. And certainly the best way of preaching and speaking too before any assembly, is first to gain their heads before you attempt their hearts, first to convince their understandings before you endeavor to rouse their passions. If any man had ever the gift of the spirit and the light within, St. Paul had surely as much as any, and yet he was far from neglecting reason as a carnal or worldly thing; but on the contrary endeavors to establish the doctrines of revelation by arguments of reason. If any man was ever infallible and spoke as the oracle of God, St. Paul did surely as much as any, and yet he was far from expecting a blind assent and resignation in his hearers, but on the contrary sheweth by his example as well as by his precepts, that he would have all men (1 Theff. V. 21.) "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." "He reasoned," as his custom was; and the subjects which he

reasoned about were "righteousness, temperance and judgment to come." Not that these were the only topics upon which he insisted; for it is said expressly, that Felix "sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ." He spoke therefore of other matters as well as of these; but these he insisted upon particularly, and therefore these are particularly mentioned. However by this instance the apostle sheweth plainly that he thought one great end of revealed religion was to advance and enforce natural religion, and the preaching of morality was indeed the preaching of Christianity.

But St. Paul had a farther view in this discourse; and when "he reasoned of righteousness, temperance and judgment to come," he insisted upon topics which were particularly adapted to his audience. The discourse is wonderfully apposit and proper, "of righteousness or justice," before a corrupt, avaricious, and unjust governor; "of temperance or continence" before a man and a woman who had married in violation of all laws, her former husband still living; "and of judgment to come," which will be a righteous tribunal indeed, where no man's poverty will expose him, no man's power will protect him, but all will be condemned who shall be found guilty of such hainous offenses. For that such were the characters of Felix and Drusilla, all history that speaketh of them testifies. Tacitus,

tus, the (1) Roman historian, in two places giveth Felix the character of a most cruel, libidinous, and tyrannical governor. And the (2) Jewish historian, Josephus relates how he enticed Drusilla the daughter of Herod Agrippa, from Azizus king of the Emefenes her husband, and married her, and had a child by her. Josephus (3) also records another abominable action of which he was guilty, how he corrupted an intimate friend of Jonathan the high-priest, to assassinate him only for remonstrating against his conduct. Upon the whole his government was so corrupt and grievous, that after his return to Rome the rulers of the Jews followed him thither with their complaints to the emperor; but his brother Pallas being prime minister and favorite at that time, we do not find that they obtained any redress. With what propriety therefore doth the apostle discourse before such an auditory “of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come:” and are not his ingenuity and address admirable, in suiting so the subject to the persons and occasion, and his honest zeal and courage still more admirable, in daring to assert those truths, which it was necessary for them

(1) Felix Judæe impositus
& cuncta malefacta sibi impune
ratus tantâ potentia subnixo.

Tacit. Annal. L. 12.

Felix per omnem savitiam
ac libidinem jus regium servi i
ingenio exercuit, Drusillâ in
matrimonium acceptâ.

Id. Hist. L. 5.

(2) Φιλετ,

them indeed to hear, but which it was dangerous for himself to speak? And what an excellent pattern is here for the ministers of the gospel not so much to speak *smooth* things as *right* things, not to spare even vice in high places, not to be afraid of mentioning hell and the terrors of the Lord in the politest congregations, but (2 Tim. IV. 2.) to “preach the word, be instant in season and out of season, to reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine!” A truth fitly spoken may pierce the heart of the greatest and proudest offender; as here before his prisoner, struck with his address, convinced by his reasoning, overawed by his eloquence, “Felix trembled.”

II. But we are not to look upon this incident altogether as the effect of St. Paul's eloquence; we may consider it, as we proposed in the 2d place, partly as the effect of *remorse of conscience* in *Felix*. For without doubt had Felix been more virtuous and innocent, he would not have been so struck and confounded. St. Paul reasoned “of righteousness temperance and judgment to come” in general terms. The conscience of Felix made the

(2) Φηλίζ, διασάμενος ταύτην, και τω Φαύλῳ γηρασθαι. ταχυστα (Drusillam) και γαρ ην καλλει δε εξ αυτης παδα προσηγομενται πασιν διαφεροντα, λαμβανει της Αγγριππας.

γυναικῶ επιθυμιαν, και επειθε τον ανδρα καταλιπεσαν αυτω γηρασθαι

Joseph. Antiq. L. 20. c. 6,

Edit. Hudson.

η δε κακως εργατρεσαται—φαρα-
ωναι τῃς παλαιοι νομιμα πινεται,

(3) Ibid. Cap. 7.

particular application, and brought the discourse home to himself. That faithful witness represented to him, how deficient he had been in those virtues, which the apostle was recommending, and consequently what great reason he had to apprehend the future judgment of God: and therefore forgetting the state and authority of a governor, in the presence of the court, he is so possessed with the fear of another tribunal, that he sitteth trembling in his own. Oh! the force of truth not to be withstood! Oh! the pangs and horrors of a guilty mind not to be stifled or concealed! He doth not whisper his fears in private to the partner of his crime and his bed; but showeth them in his very countenance, and trembles before his attendants, trembles before his prisoner. And can any infidel pretend, that religion is nothing more than a state-engin, a politic device to keep only children and subjects in awe, when here a great governor, and brother to the first Minister of the empire at that time, is so far convinced of its truth and reality, as even to shake at the voice of an apostle? This single instance sheweth the natural power of conscience in man; what a faithful monitor we carry within our own breasts to direct us to virtue and to dehort us from vice; the best of friends and companions if we do well, the worst of enemies and accusers if we do evil; and though we may chance to lull it asleep for a time, yet some accidents

accidents some occasions or other will awaken it, and it will at least sometimes be heard, it will not it cannot always be silenced.

It is observed indeed that St. Paul's discourse had not the same effect upon Drusilla. "Felix trembled," but it is not said that Drusilla trembled too. However the discourse might have had the same effect upon her that it had upon him; and yet Felix only, as being the principal person, be mentioned. But if it had not the same effect upon her that it had upon him, yet what doth this argue more than that the corruption of the best is the worst, and that women, when they give themselves up to commit iniquity, I know not how put off their nature, and are commonly worse prostitutes and more abandoned than men? She had sinned too against greater light and conviction, She being a Jewess and He only a Heathen; and the more any one sinneth, the more the conscience is hardened in sinning. This too perhaps was one of her gay thoughtless hours, for the soul is not at all times equally susceptible of good impressions. The same discourse might have affected her in a different manner at another opportunity. For I very much question whether it is possible for human nature to be so dead in trespasses and sins, as to be quite deaf to all the calls of honor, all the cries of conscience.

Even they, who have pretended to ridicule the notion of conscience, and have endeavored

all they can to eradicate this religious terror out of the minds of others, have never yet been able to conquer or suppress it in themselves. It is related of the famous Author of the Leviathan, a man who by his writings hath done infinite prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that He could never endure to be in the dark alone: and why should a philosopher be more afraid of darkness than of light? There can be no reason in the nature of things. The reason must be in the fears and horrors of his own guilty mind. It is reported of another since, the Author of the Oracles of reason, that whenever it thundered, he was wont to be so terrified, that immediately (like Caligula formerly) he made up his windows; crept into the bed, or any where to hide himself; which surely was very strange, that One, who could make a jest of the terrors of hell, should be so frightened at a clap of thunder. And thus, as the Wisdom of Solomon says of the Egyptian magicians of old time, (Wisd. XVII. 8, 11.) "They that
 "promised to drive away terrors and troubles
 "from a sick soul, were sick themselves of
 "fear worthy to be laughed at; For" as he argues, "wickedness condemned by her own
 "witness is very timorous, and always fore-
 "casteth grievous things." The principle is in nature, and it seemeth not possible for art entirely to overcome it. As long as you can discern the difference between moral good and
 evil,

evil, as long as you have a mind capable of reflecting upon your own actions, so long you will have a conscience accusing or else excusing you, and painful sensations will follow from the one, pleasing sensations from the other.

Nor is it any reasonable objection to this doctrine, that some sinners appear always daring and intrepid, and pass their days seemingly in gaiety as great as their wickedness, as if they had no conscience to accuse them, and there was no God to punish them. For certainly all tempers are not alike, as all metals are not of the same hardness and consistency. Some men are naturally more hardened and obdurate, more stupid and insensible than others: but because they seem to have little sense or feeling, would you therefore conclude that they have no sense or feeling at all? Or perhaps they have been trained up in wickedness from their youth, and no wonder then they have (1 Tim. IV. 2.) "their conscience seared with a hot iron," and custom is in a manner become a second nature. Or perhaps you see them only during their lucid intervals; for this fever of the mind is not always burning, the fit is not always upon them, but sometimes intermits. At another time you would think them as miserable, as now they appear happy. But if they could wear an eternal smile upon their face, yet how do you know what anguish lieth at their heart? Alas! if the curtain was to be drawn

drawn away, what a dismal scene would be presented there! They may laugh at conscience, but they will feel it. The mask may be put on for a time; but could you behold them in solitude, in distress, in sickness, the case would be very much altered, and you would find them desponding and despairing, restless and impatient, wearied of life and almost ready to put an end to it by violent means, so that with full conviction you would subscribe to the truth of Solomon's observation, (Prov. XVIII. 14.) "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" Nay even supposing (what is hardly to be supposed) that they should die seemingly easy, as they have lived seemingly happy; yet this may be all affectation; they may only be acting a part; as there are criminals, who will deny the fact of which they are guilty to the very last. But even if it should all be real, yet because there are some monsters in the moral world as well as in the natural, would you therefore deny that there is any regular course, any settled laws in the one or the other? because there are some idiots and madmen, would you therefore not define a man to be a reasonable creature? A particular instance or two conclude nothing against a general rule; and the general rule in this case, that scripture, reason, experience, all confirm is this, (Isa. LVII. 20, 21.) "The wicked are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest,

“rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt;
 “there is no peace saith my God to the
 “wicked.”

As you regard then the peace and quiet of your mind, (Acts XXIV. 16.) “have always
 “a conscience void of offense toward God
 “and toward men.” A prudent man would not willingly make an enemy of any body, and much less would he raise in himself an enemy to himself. There is no enjoyment of any thing in life without peace of mind; and there is no peace of mind without virtue and innocence. Guilt is always its own punishment, and begins that hell in our bosoms here, which will be our eternal portion hereafter, unless we take care to prevent it by timely repentance. For this is the proper use of conscience, this is the gracious purpose of Almighty God in placing that reflective faculty in our breasts, that from the sense of evil we may learn to avoid it, that from the dread of punishment we may be wise in time to prevent it, that judging and condemning ourselves we may not be judged and condemned of the Lord, that from the pain and anguish which we feel after the commission of sin in this world, we may be warned to escape the greater torments of the world to come, (2 Cor. VII. 10.) “our godly sorrow working repentance to
 “salvation not to be repented of.” Happy had it been for Felix, if he had been thus affected; but he dismisses his good thoughts and
 the

the apostle together, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." "He sent for him" indeed afterwards, "and communed with him," but it was not out of any religious, but merely from an avaricious motive, "hoping that money should have been given him of Paul that he might loose him." He had heard Paul say, that he had "brought alms to his nation and offerings," and he might suppose that he could not want money for his own uses and occasions. Thus the lightning, that darted upon his soul, vanished almost as soon as it appeared; and I wish there are not too many, like Felix, having only short transient fits of religion and never improving them into habits. They have a particular engagement upon their hands, they are obliged to meet some company, they must attend urgent business; and so frame to themselves twenty idle excuses, and put off the necessary work of repentance and reformation to a more convenient season. But there can be no season to make our peace with God so convenient as the present; and such is the uncertainty of human life, that if it be not done now, it may be done never. Oh! let us therefore consider "in this our day the things which belong to our peace," before "they are hid from our eyes." If not for God's sake, yet for our own sake, let us never offend against the light and conviction of conscience; but if we have
offended,

offended, let us listen to its reproofs, and make peace again as soon as ever we can! And so (1 John III. 19, 20, 21.) "we shall assure
 " our hearts before God; For if our heart
 " condemn us, God is greater than our heart
 " and knoweth all things; But if our heart
 " condemn us not, then have we confidence
 " toward God."

DISSERTATION XXXIX.

St. PAUL at MELITA.

ST. Paul having appealed unto the Roman Emperor was now going a prisoner to Rome. In his voyage it happened the vessel was ship-wracked, but the men "escaped all
 " safe to land." In the foregoing chapter the apostle had foretold this distress and danger, "We must be cast," said he, "upon a cer-
 " tain island," but yet he assured them, "There shall be no loss of any man's life
 " among you, but of the ship." Accordingly the event fully answered the prediction, "they
 " were cast upon a certain island, and they
 " escaped all safe to land. And when they
 " were

“ were escaped, (Acts XXVIII. r.) then they “ knew that the island was called Melita,” now called Malta, an island in the Mediterranean between Sicily and Barbary, famous for an order of knights settled there, who were at first knights of Jerusalem, then of Rhodes, now of Malta; and in this island I think they still show a place called the arrival or haven of St. Paul.

A very learned and ingenious (1) man hath attempted to prove, that the Melita we speak of in the Mediterranean below Sicily was not the island upon which St. Paul was cast away, but another of the same name up in the Adriatic gulf near the coast of Illyria, now called Melede. Something plausible may be said on both sides; some circumstances before the shipwreck seem to favor this latter opinion, others again after the shipwreck rather confirm the former. St. Luke saith expressly, that “ when the fourteenth night was come, they “ were driven up and down in Adria.” This island consequently must needs be somewhere in *Adria*, and the Illyrian Melita was in the Adriatic gulf strictly so called. But the word *Adria* was of large extent and signification; for not only the poets use it for the great Ionian sea, reaching to the isthmus of Corinth, but Strabo likewise saith that it comprehends the

(1) See Mr. Bryant's Dissertation of the island Melita, in his Observations relating to various parts of ancient history: but

the Ionian sea; Ptolemy extends it to Sicily on the west, and to Peloponnesus and Crete on the east; and Orosius and other later authors include in it not only the Sicilian and Cretan seas, but also the Libyan to the coast of Africa. "A ship of Alexandria" was much more likely to winter in the Mediterranean than in the Illyrian Melita: and when they set sail, the direct and ready course from the Mediterranean Melita was to "Syracuse," and thence to "Rhegium," and from thence to "Puteoli;" whereas from the Illyrian Melita they would probably have landed at Brundisium or some other port on that side of Italy, and not have passed by "Rhegium" to "Syracuse," and from "Syracuse" to "Rhegium" back again. Any one needs only look upon his map to be convinced which is the best and easiest course, and most likely to be taken. I cannot depart therefore from the commonly received opinion, which hath so many probable arguments to support it, so many great authorities to favor it, and the general tradition of so many ages and nations to confirm it.

As soon as Paul and his companions were got safe to shore, the people of the island treated them with great humanity and kindness; (ver. 2.) "And the barbarous people showed

but see likewise on the other alt. Lib. 1. cap. 26.
 vide Bocharti Geog. Sacr. Pars

“ us no little kindness,” as the historian proceeds who was himself one of the company, “ for they kindled a fire and received us every one because of the present rain and because of the cold.” In such distresses and difficulties every one is willing to shift for himself; (ver. 3.) “ And when Paul had gathered a bundle of sticks,” and was laying them on the fire, there came a viper, forced from its cover by the heat and enraged “ fastened on his hand.” When the people of the island saw this sad accident befall him, they presently concluded that because he was the most unfortunate, he must certainly be the most wicked of the company; (ver. 4.) “ and said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer whom though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.” But natural causes do not always produce natural effects, if God pleases to suspend them; for the apostle (ver. 5.) “ shook off the” viper “ into the fire and felt no harm. (ver. 6.) Howbeit “ they” still “ looked” expecting “ when he should have swollen” with the poison “ or fallen down dead suddenly,” the venom of such creatures being very strong and almost immediate death in those hot countries; “ but after they had looked a great while and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god.” Let us stop here, and reflect a little upon the particulars of this relation. The incidents are
not

not only uncommon, but will afford ample matter of instruction, without wire-drawing or refining too much upon them; and at the same time may serve to show how the historical parts of scripture will furnish us with useful lessons as well as the preceptive and moral, if we will but duly meditate upon them.

The first passage that will strike us in this relation is the *civility* of these, as they are called, *Barbarians*. St. Luke denominates them so, purely in compliance with the common form of speaking. Writing in Greek, he expresseth himself after the manner of the Greeks, who proudly called all people Barbarians who were not of their own country or colonies from thence: and the natives of this island were the descendents of the Phenicians or Carthaginians. But experience and knowledge of the world may easily evince the vanity and falsity of this narrow way of thinking; and the inhabitants of this little island, though they were called *barbarians*, yet proved themselves otherwise by their actions, and behaved really much better than many of those who pass for civilized people. These Heathens did not, as some even Christians perhaps would have done, strip plunder and murder the persons who were shipwrecked upon their coast; but on the contrary “showed them no little kindness, for they kindled a fire and received them every one because of the present rain, and because of the cold.” And

certainly hospitality to strangers, compassion to persons in distress, are not only our most amiable qualities as we are men, but even our distinguishing ornaments as we are Christians. "Be not forgetful," says the apostle, (Heb. XIII. 2.) "to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." These Heathens could see the reasonableness of such a practice by the light of nature. Humanity prompted them to that, which is farther enforced upon us by Christianity; and thereby they entertained, if I may so speak, a human angel, a messenger of God, one who brought them the glad tidings of the gospel, and planted Christianity among them, where it seemeth to have taken root and grown ever since. "Be not" therefore "forgetful to entertain strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels," some have entertained apostles, "unawares." Such an exhortation may perhaps be more proper in a nation, that in former ages at least was not very remarkable for its civility and hospitality to strangers, or rather was very remarkable for the contrary. 'Britannos hospitibus feros,' "the Britons cruel to strangers" is the character with which the politest (2) Roman poet hath branded us to all ages; and this account of us is confirmed by the general suffrage of antiquity, as if we were divided from the whole

(2) Horace.

world

world in our manners as much as in our situation, and our natures partook of the roughness and boisterousness of that element, with which we are surrounded. Nay, there are even now complaints of the same kind, though perhaps not to the same degree. Our people are generally reckoned more averse from strangers, more silent and sullen, less civil and obliging, than our neighbours on the continent. Yet at the same time it is certain there is not a nation upon earth that is fonder of foreign commodities and foreign performers in every kind, there is not a nation that more affects foreign fashions and every thing that is foreign; and the instances of our folly and extravagance in this kind, as they exceed all former ages, so will hardly be believed by any future. The truth is we are sparing of that civility which costeth us nothing, and lavish of that which costeth us a great deal: and it would be better for us, if we were more liberal of our compliments, and more frugal of our treasure; we should be less ridiculous and more respected.

2. Another reflection that naturally results from this relation is that the best of men and the greatest favorites of heaven are liable to misfortunes as well as other people; they are not only involved in the general calamities which befall mankind, but are also subject to particular accidents and disasters of their own. The apostle, we see, was not only exposed with the rest to the danger of a shipwreck, but on

shore another misfortune happened to him in particular; for “when he had gathered a bundle of sticks and laid them on the fire, there came a viper out of the fire, and fastened on his hand.” And these things happened unto him for ensamples; they were not for the punishment or correction of any of his sins, but as our Saviour said of the man who was born blind, (John IX. 3.) “that the works of God should be made manifest in him.” Whoever therefore thou art who liest under any afflictions, if thy afflictions are not the effects and consequences of thy own sins and follies as generally they may be discerned whether they are or not, comfort thyself that misfortunes are no certain marks and tokens of the divine displeasure; they are only for the exercise of thy patience, for the trial and illustration of thy virtue, and “will work” for thee “a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” Thou seest that the blessed apostle St. Paul was liable to misfortunes as much or more than other men; and is thy piety so much greater as to plead the privilege of exemption? Nay “the captain of our salvation” himself was “made perfect through sufferings;” and wilt thou refuse to drink of the cup that he drunk of, wilt thou be ashamed to take up thy cross and follow him? Forget not “the exhortation which speaketh unto thee” as a son, (Heb. XII. 5, 6.) “My son despise not thou the chastening
“ of

“ of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chastneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.”

3. These barbarians as they are called not only behaved with humanity and civility to the persons who were shipwrecked upon their coast, but had also some notions of a God and a providence, and of a particular vengeance that was due to murder, and did not fail to pursue it. They knew something not only of their duty to men, but likewise of their duty to God. And indeed there is hardly any nation how rude and barbarous soever, how remote and distant soever from the commerce and conversation of the rest of mankind ; there is hardly any nation, I say, without these general notions of religion, so careful hath God been not to leave himself without witness. These notions are some of the first and most obvious discoveries of natural light and knowlege ; they are so agreeable to reason, that reason presently apprehends the truth and fitness of them ; there is no necessity of learning, there is no need of great proficiency in arts and sciences ; our natural faculties from the contemplation of the world and the things of the world will lead us to the acknowledgement of a God and a providence, and will easily mark the difference between virtue and vice, especially in such flagrant instances as *murder*, which of all sins is the most shocking to human nature, maketh

our very blood to run cold and filleth us with horror at the thought of it. No wonder men by the light of nature conclude that a more immediate curse attends such a crime, and vengeance surer than any blood-hound pursues it. There is not only all the reason in the world for thinking so, but experience farther confirms it. For it is surprising by what strange accidents, by what unheeded unsuspected methods, murder is generally discovered, though contrived with the deepest malice and perpetrated with the greatest secrecy. A visible curse for ever after attends the authors and contrivers of it, and usually sooner or later justice overtakes them. I forbear to specify any facts of this kind. Every one's memory will supply him with particular instances. If such vengeance be due to the murder of a single person, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who in the wantonness of their wars, out of pride or ambition, cruelty or revenge, sacrifice the lives of thousands and tens of thousands? And yet the world commonly is so foolish or unjust as to magnify these men for heroes; when they are in truth and reality the butchers of mankind. The rack or the gallows shall be the portion of an ordinary assassin; while a Cæsar or Alexander shall be celebrated by the tongues and pens of all posterity. If the saying is true in any sense more than another, it is certainly in
this;

this, (Luke VI. 26.) "Woe unto you when
"all men shall speak well of you."

But 4thly though these barbarians were right in their principle that a particular vengeance was due to murder, yet they were wrong in the application of it to St. Paul; "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom
"though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." And this passage may serve as a caution to us, how we interpret the misfortunes of others as punishments for their sins. There is nothing more common among men than this way of thinking and judging, and yet nothing in which they are more liable to be mistaken. Thus much indeed we must allow, that if there had never been any sin in the world there would never have been any trouble; and if this life contained the whole period of men's existence, we might certainly collect the exact proportion of their virtues or vices from their prosperity or adversity; whoever was the most fortunate would be the best man, and whoever was the most unfortunate would be the worst. But as this life is designed only for a state of probation, and the next for a state of retribution; as here men are only upon trial, and hereafter shall receive the reward of their works, it is impossible for us in many cases (Eccles. IX. 1.) "to know
"either love or hatred," mercy or judgment
"by all that is before us;" there may be (Eccles. VIII. 14.) "righteous men to whom
"it happeneth according to the work of the
U 4 "wicked,"

“wicked,” and there may be “wicked men” to whom it happeneth according to the “work of the righteous.” Not but temporal punishments are often inflicted upon men for their wickedness, and sometimes we may plainly discern the hand of God in the execution of his judgments. When Pharaoh, who had ordered the male children of the Hebrews to be drowned, was himself drowned with all his host; when Adonibezek, who had cut off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, had his own thumbs and great toes cut off; when in the place where Ahab and Jezebel caused the dogs to lick the blood of Naboth, the dogs also licked their blood; when any such calamity overtakes a sinner, when his suffering is so conformable to his sin, I think we may without hesitating believe it to be God’s work, we may without any breach of charity pronounce it to be a judgment from heaven upon him; (Judg. I. 7.) “as He hath done, so the Lord hath requited him.” But generally speaking we cannot be too cautious and tender in making such reflections; we know too little of men and things to say for certain what is a judgment, and what is not; there may be mercy in judgment, as there may be judgment in mercy; and it would better become us to err on the modest and charitable side than on the presumptuous and uncharitable; for presumptuous it is with regard to God, and prying into the mysteries of his providence;

vidence; and uncharitable it is with regard to men, when we cannot sound their hearts and know exactly their merits or demerits. (Rom. XIV. 4.) "Who art thou therefore that judgest another? to his own master he standeth or falleth." The proper use that we are to make of men's temporal afflictions is not by them to judge of their spiritual condition, to arraign and condemn others as delinquents and criminals, but to infer from thence the necessity of repentance for ourselves. And this is the use that our Saviour himself directs us to make of such occurrences; (Luke XIII. 1, &c.) "Suppose ye that these Galileans, whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices, were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay; but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."

5. We have here a specimen of that miraculous power which accompanied the apostles; for St. Paul "shook off" the viper "into the fire and felt no harm." The poison of such creatures is exceeding strong and almost immediate death, as we said before, in those hot countries; but poison loseth its force, and the most noxious creature becomes innocent in

in the hands of an apostle. This incident is miraculous in itself, and appears still more miraculous, as our Saviour had foretold and promised that thus it should be; (Mark XVI. 17, 18.) "And these signs shall follow them
 " that believe, in my name shall they cast out
 " devils, they shall speak with new tongues;
 " they shall TAKE UP SERPENTS, and if they
 " drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them."
 So that it was not only doing a miracle, but doing a miracle that was signified beforehand by the Spirit of prophecy. "Behold I give
 " you power over serpents and scorpions," (Luke X. 19.) said our Saviour to his disciples upon another occasion, "and nothing shall
 " by any means hurt you:" and perhaps the reason for assigning this power so particularly, was because the devil had in that shape so long deluded mankind, or at least it was the symbol by which he was usually represented. However that be, this miracle was very proper to awaken the consideration of the people of the island, to convince them that an extraordinary person was come among them, and to procure the greater reverence to his person, and better attention to his doctrine: and this, no doubt, with the other miracles which he wrought contributed greatly to the easier reception of Christianity among them. So wonderfully do all events conspire to the glory of God; and so seasonably was the apostle preserved in the crisis and instant of danger! (Psal. XXXIV.

19.) "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

6. We have here likewise an instance of the fickleness and inconstancy of the people, now reviling, now admiring, and changing from one extreme to the other; for "after they had looked a great while and saw no harm come to him, they changed their minds and said that he was a god." At first they were really very hospitable, their hospitality was soon lost in their censoriousness, and their censoriousness was turned into almost adoration. This adventure was just the reverse of what befell the apostle at Lystra. For there he was first taken for a "god," and they were going to do sacrifice unto him; afterwards their minds were so wrought upon and changed, that they suffered him to be "stoned." Here they first reviled him as a "murderer," and then they were for adoring him as a "god." So very uncertain a thing is popularity, often gained and often lost, not only without any reason, but even against all reason. For it is too common with men to judge by appearances, to conceive unreasonable prejudices, or entertain partial fondnesses without much consideration: And as they take up their opinions hastily, it is no wonder they are liable to change, approve what they before condemned, and condemn what they before approved, and then they seldom know any moderation or measure

measure in things; they are all in extremes, as violent in their censures as extravagant in their commendations; now making a man a "murderer," and now a "god." The "noise" of the waves and the madness of the people," (Psal. LXV. 7.) are sometimes compared together. They are both subject to their ebbs and their flows. The winds and humors as various as the winds raise and depress both the one and the other.

And therefore lastly we see how a wise man should behave in such circumstances by the example of the apostle; who when he was reviled as a murderer, reviled not again, but "shook off the beast into the fire and felt no harm;" and when he was magnified as a "god," he was no more affected with the one than the other, no more elevated with their vain applause than dejected with their vain slander. And certainly a wise man should neither turn aside to the right hand nor to the left, but proceed regularly and resolutely in his duty, without considering what ignorant people may say for him or against him, as little disturbed with their censure as pleased with their commendation. Not but reputation is a valuable thing, and we cannot pay too much regard to the censures of the world, when they are well founded. But what signifies all the applause of men, when we are conscious to ourselves that our hearts are not right in the sight of God, and we do not really deserve

serve it? It is no better than gilding a statue of lead, which contributes little or nothing to the real and intrinsic value. The lead is still but lead, and the man is not one jot wiser or better for all the praises bestowed upon him. On the other hand what is calumny to a man, when he is satisfied of his own virtue and integrity, when he is supported by a good cause and a good conscience? It is but like throwing of mud and dirt into a pure fountain, which soon purges and refines itself, and the farther it runs, the clearer it grows. Virtue is not less virtue, but rather the more, for detraction and slander; the greater its trial, and the greater its reward; and our Saviour commands us to glory in such infamy as honor, in such cursing as blessing; (Matt. V. 11, 12.)

“Blessed are ye when men shall revile you
 “and say all manner of evil against you falsely
 “for my sake; Rejoice and be exceeding
 “glad, for great is your reward in heaven.”

It is the fate of the best men to be decried as much by some, as they are extolled by others; for it was the fate of the apostles before us to live (2 Cor. VI. 8.) in “honor and dishonor,” in “evil report and good report.” All that we have to do is, if our friends commend us, let us take care to deserve their commendations; if our enemies revile us, let us live so that no body may believe them. And particularly let us remember that not by the sayings of others, but by our own actions we shall be

be judged at the last great day. And in the mean time let us endeavor to please God rather than men, and be ready every one of us to say with the apostle; (1 Cor. IV. 3, &c.) “With
 “me it is a very small thing, that I should
 “be judged of you or of man’s judgment,
 “but he that judgeth me is the Lord:
 “Therefore judge nothing before the time
 “until the Lord come, who both will bring
 “to light the hidden things of darkness, and
 “will make manifest the counsels of the
 “hearts; and then shall every man have praise
 “of God.”

DISSERTATION XL.

On Confirmation.

CONFIRMATION being a rite of the Church of England, as well as of the primitive Church, it may be proper to deduce it from its source and origin, the better to satisfy us both of the reasonableness of the thing, and of the manner of performing it. We cannot pretend to say that it is of divine, but it will be found to be of apostolical institution.

Strong

Strong as the national prejudices were of the Jews to the Samaritans, yet Christian charity was stronger, and able to prevail over them. For Philip, one of the seven deacons, and the second in order after Stephen, upon the dispersion of the church at Jerusalem, went to Samaria, to publish the glad tidings of the gospel in that city. (Acts VIII. 5.) "Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." It is much to the honor of the Samaritans, that the same doctrine, was persecuted in Jerusalem, was gladly received at Samaria. For (ver. 6.) "the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did." His miracles, like the other gospel-miracles, were of the salutary kind, the casting out of devils, and the healing of infirmities and diseases. "For (ver. 7.) unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed with them; and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed." And (ver. 8.) "there was great joy in that city:" the people were not only rejoiced at the miraculous cures wrought among them, but also received the word with joy and gladness of heart. They had before been bewitched by the sorceries of Simon Magus; but now they gave greater attention to the divine truth and the divine power manifested by Philip, and both men and women were baptized in the name

name of the Lord Jesus. (ver. 9 and 12.)
“ There was a certain man called Simon, who
“ beforetime in the same city used sorcery,
“ and bewitched the people of Samaria: But
“ when they believed Philip, preaching the
“ things concerning the kingdom of God, and
“ the name of Jesus Christ, they were bap-
“ tized both men and women.” So success-
fully did Philip imitate the example of his
lord and master in preaching the gospel to the
Samaritans, and for his labor of love in con-
verting this and other cities, he was afterwards
(XXI. 8, 9.) dignified with the title of “ the
“ evangelist,” and his daughters were indued
with the gift of prophecy. When the apostles,
who notwithstanding the persecution raging at
Jerusalem still remained in that city, had heard
of Philip’s success in preaching the gospel at
Samaria, they sent thither two of their num-
ber Peter and John to confirm the new con-
verts. (ver. 14.) “ Now when the apostles
“ who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria
“ had received the word of God, they sent
“ unto him Peter and John.” As yet the new
converts were only baptized, and had not re-
ceived the holy Ghost: but when the apostles
were arrived, they prayed for the descent of
the holy Ghost, and layed their hands on them;
and such was the blessed effect of their prayer
and imposition of hands, that the holy Ghost
was immediately conferred on the true be-
lievers. (ver. 15, 16, 17.) “ Who when they
“ where

“ were come down, prayed for them that they
 “ might receive the holy Ghost : (For as yet
 “ he was fallen upon none of them ; only they
 “ were baptized in the name of the Lord Je-
 “ sus.) Then layed they their hands on them,
 “ and they received the holy Ghost.” This
 history may furnish us with several useful re-
 flections relative to *Confirmation* ; a subject at
 no time unseasonable or improper either for
 those who have already received, or those who
 are yet to receive, the benefits of this mini-
 stration.

I. We may infer from hence the expediency
 and usefulness of confirmation after baptism.
 For we see that after the Samaritans were con-
 verted and baptized by Philip, the apostles sent
 two of their number to confirm the new con-
 verts, to pray for them, and to lay their hands
 on them, that they might receive the holy Ghost.
 In like manner the disciples at Ephesus (Acts
 XIX. 5, 6.) “ were” first “ baptized in the
 “ name of the Lord Jesus : And when Paul
 “ had layed his hands upon them, the holy
 “ Ghost came on them ; and they spake with
 “ tongues and prophesied.” And the divine
 author of the Epistle to the Hebrews reckons
 “ the doctrin of baptism and of laying on
 “ of hands” among the fundamentals of the
 Christian religion. (Heb. VI. 1, 2.) “ There-
 “ fore leaving the principles of the doctrin of
 “ Christ, let us go on unto perfection ; not
 “ laying again the foundation of repentance
 Vol. V. X “ from

“ from dead works, and of faith towards God;
 “ Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying
 “ on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead,
 “ and of eternal judgment.” By which “ im-
 “ position of hands,” mentioned immediately
 with “ baptism,” the best commentators both
 ancient and modern have always understood the
 holy rite of confirmation; and Calvin himself
 remarks upon the place, that this single text
 abundantly testifies that confirmation was of
 apostolical institution.

Nor was this ceremony only of temporary
 institution, and limited to the days of the
 apostles, but was continually practised in all
 the succeeding ages of the church. The tra-
 dition is evidently derived from scripture, and
 is both primitive and universal; and next to
 the plain words of scripture, the traditive in-
 terpretation and general practice of the church
 of God is the best argument for any ritual mi-
 nistration. Tertullian, who is very exact in
 his accounts of the customs of the primitive
 church, having spoken of the rites of baptism,
 says (1) that ‘ after baptism the hand is im-
 posed,

(1) Dehinc manus imponi-
 tur, per benedictionem advo-
 cans et invitans Spiritum sanc-
 tum. Tertull. de Baptismo.
 Sect. 8. p. 226.

Caro abluitur, ut anima
 emaculetur.—Caro manus im-
 positione adumbratur, ut et
 anima Spiritu illuminetur. De
 Resurrectione Carnis, Sect. p.

8. 330. Edit. Rigaltii, Paris
 1675.

(2) Quia legitimum et ec-
 clesiasticum baptisma consecuti
 fuerant, baptizari eos ultra non
 oportebat: sed tantummodo
 quod deerat, id a Petro et
 Joanne factum est, ut oratione
 pro eis habita, et manu impo-
 sita, invocaretur et infunderetur

posed, by blessing calling for and inviting the holy Spirit : and again in another place, speaking of baptism and confirmation, the body is washed, that the soul may be cleansed ; the body is overshadowed by imposition of hands, that the soul also may be illuminated by the Spirit. St. Cyprian, relating this very history of the Samaritan converts (2), says, that having obtained lawful and ecclesiastical baptism, there was no necessity for them to be baptized again ; but only what was wanting, that was done by Peter and John, that prayer being made for them, and hands imposed, the holy Spirit might be invoked and infused upon them. Which now also says he, is practised among us, that they who are baptized in the church, may be presented to the governors of the church, and by our prayer and imposition of hands may obtain the holy Spirit, and be consummated with the Lord's signature, that is be made perfect Christians by confirmation. We might multiply quotations without end, but only one other testimony shall be cited from (3) St. Jerome, which is very full to our purpose.

tur super eos Spiritus sanctus. Quod nunc quoque apud nos geritur, ut qui in ecclesia baptizantur, prappositis ecclesie offerantur, et per nostram orationem ac manus impositionem, Spiritum sanctum consequantur, et signaculo Dominico consummentur. Cy-

prian. Epist. 73. p. 308. Edit. Felli.

(3) An nescis etiam ecclesiarum hunc esse morem, ut baptizatis postea manus imponantur, et ita invocetur Spiritus sanctus? Exigis ubi scriptum sit? In Actibus Apostolorum. Etiam si scripturae auctoritas non

purpose. ‘ Know you not,’ says he, ‘ that
 ‘ this is the custom of the churches, that after
 ‘ persons are baptized, hands should be im-
 ‘ posed, and the holy Ghost invoked? Do
 ‘ you inquire where it is written? In the Acts
 ‘ of the Apostles. But although the authority
 ‘ of scripture was wanting, the consent of the
 ‘ whole christian world in this particular would
 ‘ have the force of a command.’ The church
 of England therefore had good authority for
 saying as she doth in her Canons, that “ it
 “ hath been a solemn, ancient, and laudable
 “ custom in the church of God, continued
 “ from the apostles times, that all bishops
 “ should lay their hands upon children bap-
 “ tized and instructed in the catechism of
 “ christian religion, praying over them and
 “ blessing them.” Can. LX.

In the primitive times confirmation was
 usually administered soon after baptism; and
 there was then very good reason for it, most
 of the new converts being adult or grown up
 to years of discretion. But now when almost
 all who are baptized are infants, it is more
 properly deferred till they arrive to an age ca-
 pable of being instructed and grounded in the
 principles of the Christian religion. If con-
 firmation was judged expedient for adult per-
 sons who were baptized, how much more ne-
 cessary is it that those who were baptized when
 infants,

non subesset, totius orbis in præcepti obtinerit. Hieron.
 hanc partem consensus instar advers. Luciferianos. 2da pars
 Tom.

infants, should at the proper age solemnly renew their baptismal vow, that in their own persons they should confirm and ratify what their godfathers and godmothers promised in their names, that they should make a free and open profession of the Christian religion before the congregation, and by prayer and imposition of hands be recommended to the grace and blessing of God? It is observable too, that the same kind of custom hath prevailed in the Jewish as well as in the Christian church, the reason of the thing still holding good in all churches and in all religions. As the children of Christians are admitted into covenant with God by baptism; so the children of the Jews were by circumcision. As the children of Christians are catechised, and then brought to be confirmed; so (4) the children of the Jews were carefully instructed in the principles of their religion, and at the age of thirteen years made public profession of their faith, and engaged before the congregation to observe the law of Moses. After which engagement solemn prayers were made for them, that they might persevere in their profession; and they were thenceforward called *children of the precept*; that is subject to the precepts of the law, and accountable every one for his own sins. No particular age is fixed for confirmation by the church of England; but she declares in one

Tom. 4. col. 294. Edit. Benedict.

(4) Buxtorf. Synagog. Jud. Cap. 7. Grot. in Luc. II. 42.
X 3

(5) See

one of her rubrics, that "so soon as children
 " are come to a competent age, and can say
 " in their mother tongue the Creed, the
 " Lord's prayer, and the ten Commandments,
 " and also can answer to the other questions
 " of the Catechism, they shall be brought to
 " the Bishop." The wise and prudent (5)
 governors of our church have directed that
 those who are to be confirmed should be full
fourteen years of age or upwards, and wish
 that parents would be persuaded to think the
 age of *sixteen* a more proper time for their
 children to be confirmed. No one should be
 thought of a proper age to be confirmed, till
 he was of a proper age also to partake of the
 holy communion.

II. From hence we see the reason why the
 office of confirmation is performed by the
 bishop, and by none of the other inferior mi-
 nisters of the gospel. For though Philip con-
 verted and baptized the Samaritans, yet being
 only a deacon he did not take upon him to
 confirm them; but the apostles sent two of
 their number from Jerusalem to Samaria for
 that purpose, to pray for them and to lay
 their hands on them, that they might receive
 the holy Ghost. In like manner after the
 disciples

(5) See Bishop Gibson's Di-
 rections about Confirmation.

(6) ὅθιν καὶ τὰς κορυφαίους, ἢ
 ἄλλας τινὰς, εἴναι ἰδίῳ τῷ ποιεῖν αὐ-
 τῶν ἐκ Κορυφαίου, non ali-

os, videre est hoc facere. Chry-
 sost. in Act. Apost. Rom. 18.
 p. 146. Vol. 9. Edit. Benedict.

(7) Non quidem abnuo hanc
 esse ecclesiarum consuetudinem
 &c.

disciples at Ephesus (Acts XIX. 5, 6.) had been "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, Paul laid his hands upon them, and the holy Ghost came on them." It is not said particularly who baptized them, but no less person than the apostle confirmed them. The bishops succeeding to the apostles, this office devolved upon them: and therefore St. Cyprian in the passage before cited affirms, that they who are baptized in the church are presented to the governors of the church, that by *our* prayer and imposition of hands (says he, for he was himself a bishop) they may obtain the holy Spirit, and be consummated with the Lord's signature. St. Chrysostome asking the reason why the Samaritans, who were baptized by Philip, did not receive the holy Spirit, answers that Philip being only one of the seven deacons had not the power to give the holy Spirit, for this was the gift and prerogative of the apostles alone; (6) whence also we see the bishops, and none others, perform this office. St. Jerome, though in the main no great friend to the episcopal order, yet allows that (7) it was the custom of the churches for the bishop to lay his hands and invoke the holy Spirit over those who were baptized

&c. Ecclesiæ salus in summi sacerdotis dignitate pendet, cui si non exors quædam et ab omnibus eminens detur potestas, tot in ecclesiis efficiuntur schis-

mata, quot sacerdotes. Hieron. advers. Luciferianos. Col. 295. 2da pars. Tom. 4. Edit. Benedict.

baptized by priests and deacons; that this practice was derived from the Acts of the Apostles; that the safety of the church depends upon the dignity of the high priest, to whom if an extraordinary power be not granted, there would be made in the churches as many schisms as priests. So truly primitive and apostolical in her institutions and practices is the church to which we have the happiness to belong.

III. We may observe from hence also the manner of administering confirmation, and the ceremonies used by the apostles in the celebration of it: and these were none others than *prayer* and *imposition of hands*. For when the apostles "were come down, they prayed" for the Samaritans, "that they might receive" the holy Ghost: Then layed they their hands on them, and they received the holy Ghost." Sometimes the whole is expressed by a part, by *imposition of hands*; but *prayer* is always understood, which was always an essential part in all sacred offices. It is true the ancient church added other ceremonies, as chrism or anointing, and signing with the sign of the cross. The church of Rome hath superadded many more, and hath incumbered this, as well as all other religious offices, with such a load of vain observances, that religion is sunk under them: and therefore the church of England is highly to be commended for reducing this office to its primitive simplicity, and

and using only such ceremonies as were used by the apostles themselves, *prayer* and *imposition of hands*; prayer as the means of begging a blessing, imposition of hands as the means of conveying it; the one as suppliant to God, the other as authoritative to men.

IV. From hence we may collect in the last place the benefits and advantages of confirmation. In the primitive times it was attended with extraordinary manifestations and gifts of the holy Ghost, suited to the then infant state of the church; but now the Christian religion is fully proved and established, we must expect only the secret and ordinary communications of the holy Spirit, which we may reasonably hope to receive in this regular administration, and without which it is impossible to perform the covenant that we have undertaken. The benefits and advantages of confirmation are thus very well summed up by (8) a pious and useful writer. “ It tends to
 “ preserve the unity of the church, by making men sensible, that their obedience is due to such ecclesiastical governors, who are indued with all those powers which were left by the apostles to their successors, It is a new engagement to a christian life, and is a lasting admonition and check not to dishonor or desert our christian profession. It is a testimony of God’s favor and goodness to those who receive it, when his law-

(8) See Nelson’s Feasts and Fasts, p. 542.

“ful minister declares, that God accepts their
 “proficiency, and advances them to a higher
 “degree in the church, by placing them
 “among the faithful, and thereby giving
 “them a title to approach the holy table of
 “the Lord. It conveys divine grace to en-
 “counter our spiritual enemies, and to enable
 “us to perform what we undertake.”

Confirmation being a renewal of our bap-
 tismal vow, and a solemn engagement in our
 own person to perform what was promised in
 our name at baptism, it is like baptism, where-
 of it is the completion, to be celebrated once
 only. And those who are to be confirmed,
before confirmation, should be made acquainted
 with the meaning and use of this institution,
 and whose proper office it is to administer it:
 should be carefully instructed in the nature of
 those holy promises, which they are to renew,
 and their obligation to perform them, even
 though they were not to renew them: should
 attain a competent degree of knowledge both
 of what they are to believe, and what they are
 to practise, with regard to God, their neigh-
 bour, and themselves: should farther prepare
 themselves by serious meditation and prayer,
 and for this purpose frequently read over the
 offices of baptism and confirmation. *At the*
time of confirmation they should behave them-
 selves decently and reverently, considering the
 great importance of the duty that they are then
 performing: should give due attention to what
 the

the bishop says, and make their responses distinctly and audibly : should particularly attend to the prayer which the bishop repeats over them, and say Amen at the end of it with true devotion : should not depart immediately after imposition of hands, but stay till the whole service shall be gone through, and they shall be regularly dismissed with the blessing.

After confirmation they shall return humble and hearty thanks to God, for calling them to the knowledge of his grace and faith in him : should, as soon as they have a convenient opportunity, partake of the holy communion, to which they now have the privilege of admission : should frequently reflect and meditate upon the solemn vow and covenant that they have made : should steddily persevere in their holy purposes and resolutions, and (Hebr. X. 39.) be “ not of them who draw back “ unto perdition, but of them who believe to “ the saving of the soul :” should continually beg of God to strengthen and confirm them more and more with his holy Spirit, and (Hebr. VI. 1.) “ leaving the principles of the “ doctrine of Christ, go on unto perfection,” and (Philip. III. 14.) “ press toward the mark, “ for the prize of the high calling of God “ in Christ Jesus.” In a word they should faithfully discharge their parts and duties, or otherwise no religious institutions will have any effect. Let them fulfil their promises, and God will certainly fulfil his ; and be their
God,

God, and they shall be his people; enjoy the comforts of his holy Spirit in this world, and be made partakers of a blessed immortality in the world to come.

DISSERTATION XLJ.

On Love of Novelty.

IT is useful as well as curious to observe the different humors and manners of different people. As every person is distinguished by a particular turn of genius and character, so there is likewise a particular turn of genius and character peculiar almost to every nation. Some of these characters strike us strongly in almost every walk of life, and a skilful eye may trace and discover more: but there is scarce any person who doth not plainly perceive a difference; and the vivacity and vanity of a Frenchman, the stateliness and haughtiness of a Spaniard, the avarice and extortion of a Jew and the like are become almost proverbial. The sacred writers themselves sometimes condescend to take notice of this particularity of character in particular people and nations. St. Paul hath branded the Cretians with this character from
one

one of their own poets, (Tit. I. 12.) "The
" Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow
" bellies." St. Luke, a physician and man of
litterature himself, thus characterizeth the A-
thenians. (Acts XVII. 21.) "All the Athe-
" nians and strangers which were there spent
" their time in nothing else but either to tell
" or to hear some new thing." And indeed
most authors of antiquity represent them as a
pragmatical people; and their famous orator
Demosthenes, as Grotius hath remarked, giveth
much the same character of them, and in terms
almost equivalent to those employed by St.
Luke. St. Luke by his manner of mention-
ing it plainly condemns it; and he chargeth it
not only upon "all the Athenians" but like-
wise upon "the strangers which were there,"
as men usually conform to the manners of the
place where they are, and nothing is more
common than for travelers to catch the infec-
tion of foreign fopperies in foreign countries.
It is observable also that he saith first "to tell"
and then "to hear some new thing," their
greatest pleasure was to talk and harangue, but
sometimes for want of a subject they were con-
tent to become humble auditors. *Love of no-
velty* then was the fault of the Athenians; and
is it not the fault of another nation too, who
have been stiled *a nation of politicians*, and
whose highest delight it is to be "telling" or
"hearing some new thing?" But what then?
must we delight in nothing new? Are we to
reverence

reverence every thing that is old? No certainly that extreme would be full as ridiculous as the other: and therefore it may be proper to consider, what sort of love of novelty is to be censured and condemned, and afterwards to show the absurdity of it and inconveniences attending it, in order to cure men of this impertinent spirit, that it may never be said of us, as it was said of the Athenians, that we "spent our time in nothing else but either to tell or to hear some new thing."

I. In the first place let us consider what sort of love of novelty is to be censured and condemned. In the general it may be said that the love of novelty is natural to the soul of man. There is a commendable as well as a vicious curiosity, and we ought to encourage the one as much as to suppress the other. It ought to be encouraged in children and young people especially; and is a sign of a promising genius for them to be curious in asking questions and inquisitive after knowledge. It argues narrowness and meanness of soul to be tied up to old forms and methods, so as never to vary or depart in the least from them. It cannot be said of every thing, as it is said of "wine," that "the old is better," and the new is not comparable to it. Some things were never good at first, and have only the stamp of antiquity to recommend them, but surely of all folly old folly is the worst. Other things, which might be very proper in their seasons,

may be as improper at present, through some alteration of times or change of circumstances, and are therefore better abolished than retained. God forbid that the world should become to a stand; truth and knowledge are not yet grown to their full maturity; time and culture may ripen and bring them to greater perfection: and those are the persons to be commended who are daily adding to the common stock of learning, and are not content to live upon their forefathers knowledge, any more than upon their forefathers estate, without making improvements. There are old books indeed more precious than old gold; but every new book is not therefore to be condemned. The old once were new; and what is it that renders them so valuable, but their being excellent originals: and who would not prefer an excellent original now to any copy? I hate a writer who servilely imitates and borrows all his thoughts from others, and discovers no tokens of any genius or invention of his own. Those are properly authors; who are inventors, who strike out new knowledge and teach us something that we had not learned before; or at least cloath old knowledge in a new dress with new beauties of stile and new illustrations and reflections of their own; and if they borrow any thing from ancient authors, they improve it and may be said to repay it again with interest. It is the better for passing through their hands, and like old money new-minted appears

appears with greater lustre and fuller weight than it did before. Nay I think novelty not only commendable when it promotes truth and knowlege, but allowable when it is innocent, and serveth for nothing more than to chequer and distinguish life with a little variety. For we are not barely to live, but to make life as pleasing and agreeable as we can; and it is our duty to the author and giver of life as well as to ourselves.

But though love of novelty may be right in these instances, yet it becomes wrong (as every thing becomes wrong) when it is carried into extremes, and degenerates into an idle and impertinent curiosity, either to the prejudice of ourselves or others.—It is right and one would desire to have a just knowlege and discernment of the characters and manners of men, and especially of those with whom we maintain any intercourse and conversation: but on the other hand it is certainly wrong to be too curious and prying into their affairs and circumstances, to hold an office of inquisition as it were upon their actions, to spy into the privacies and dive into the secrets of families, to concern ourselves or intermeddle at all with things which do not belong to us, and as the Scripture expresseth it, to be (1 Pet. IV. 15.) “busie bodies in other mens matters,” (1 Tim. V. 13.) “wandering about from house to house speaking things which we ought not.”—It is without doubt a reasonable curiosity, and may be

be attended both with pleasure and improvement, to desire to see foreign countries, to visit their monuments antiquities and rarities of every kind, to import the knowledge of other nations their customs and manners their laws and constitutions into our own; and well-written relations of these things must give every sensible reader a proportionable share of the pleasure and improvement and without any of the toil and trouble: but on the other hand what can be more absurd and unreasonable than the vanity of traveling which we see in some persons without the use and improvement, preferring every thing of other countries to their own, affecting foreign fashions only because they are foreign, and even their written accounts no ways to be depended upon, more properly novels and romances than voyages and travels, and filled not so much with true as with wonderful and surprising adventures.—A concern for the public is every one's duty, and our private welfare is so much interested in the welfare of the state, that no wonder we are curious to know something both of foreign and domestic occurrences, and indeed that man is hardly fit to live in the world who can be insensible to what passeth in it: but on the other hand can any thing be more completely ridiculous than for private persons to be continually busying their heads with news and politics, and to neglect their proper affairs in settling the affairs of Europe.—It is undoubt-

edly right to regard truth and argument more
 than custom and prescription, to change our
 opinions with reason rather than still to persist
 against reason ; and we are expressly command-
 ed not to build our faith upon the authority of
 fathers, (Matt. XXIII. 9.) to " call no man
 " father upon earth," but to (1 Pet. III. 15.)
 " be ready always to give a reason of the hope
 " that is in us," (1 Theff. V. 21.) to " prove
 " all things and hold fast that which is good ;"
 and (Matt. XIII. 52.) " every scribe instructed
 " unto the kingdom of heaven is likened unto
 " an householder bringing forth out of his trea-
 " sure things new" as well as " old:" but on the
 other hand it is as undoubtedly wrong for men
 to make needless innovations and alterations in
 religion, and embrace any opinions not because
 they are true but only because they are new
 and contrary to the sentiments of the rest of
 mankind, to have itching ears and run after
 other preachers and teachers than are agreeable
 to the constitution, (1 John IV. 1.) to " be-
 " lieve every spirit without trying the spirits
 " whether they are of God," to be (Eph. IV.
 14.) " tossed to and fro like children, and
 " carried about with every wind of doctrin
 " through the sleight of men and cunning
 " craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to de-
 " ceive," to pry into mysteries and the hid-
 den counsels of God, and pretend to be " wise
 " above what is written," (Col. II. 18.) " in-
 " truding into those things which they have
 " not

“ not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly
“ minds,” (1 Tim. I. 7.) “ understanding
“ neither what they say nor whereof they
“ affirm.”

II. In all these instances curiosity is evidently as wrong as it may be right in others; and having considered what sort of love of novelty is to be censured and condemned, there is the less necessity of being particular in showing (as it was proposed in the second place) the absurdity of it and inconveniences attending it, in order to cure men of this impertinent spirit, that it may never be said of us as it was said of the Athenians, that we “ spent our time in
“ nothing else but either to tell or to hear
“ some new thing.”

It is without doubt the mark of a little mind to be struck with every thing that is new, and betrays little knowledge and acquaintance with the world (1). *Nil admirari*, to admire and wonder at nothing is almost the one and only thing that can make and keep a man happy. And the greater are mens parts and capacities, and the greater their knowledge and experience in every kind, the less apt are they to be surprised at any thing, and those things are ordinary in their eyes which appear altogether extraordinary to others. Children, and men who think like children, are pleased with every new sight, and fond of every new thing. The

(1) *Nil admirari prope res est una, Numici,
Solaque quæ possit facere et servare beatum.* Hor.

more a man hath of Solomon's wisdom, the more he will approve of Solomon's conclusion, (Eccles. I. 9.) that "there is no new thing under the sun." All that is done now, was done before, and will be done again. The same parts are acted on this stage of the world, only the actors are changed. The covetous are saving, the prodigal are spending, the amorous are intriguing, the ambitious are plotting and caballing, and so they were from the beginning and so they will be to the end. There is nothing new, and therefore be surprised at nothing.—It may be that this affection for novelty, or rather affectation of novelty, is founded likewise in *vanity*, a pride in men to be taken notice of, and to distinguish themselves by something singular, when perhaps they are incapable of distinguishing themselves any other way.—Or possibly it proceeds from *levity* and *sickleness* of mind, for some men are of such uncertain natures that they cannot be pleased long with the same persons or the same things, but are ever hunting after novelty and variety. They are always in chace after happiness, but follow so many different scents and start such diversity of game that they catch none. They no sooner commence an intimacy than they begin to grow weary of it, and are continually courting new acquaintance. They are so volatile that they cannot keep their thoughts steady nor fix long upon a subject, but ramble from book to book and from one study to another,

ther, and in them is fulfilled the character of Reuben, (Gen. XLIX. 4.) "Unstable as water" "thou shalt not excell."—Or possibly it proceeds from an *uneasy discontented* temper, for restless spirits, who cannot be easy at home, naturally look abroad, and weary of themselves and weary of their condition seek relief in new objects, new diversions, new company, as men in a fever are constantly turning from side to side, and change from one posture to another.

But what increases the evil is, that this love of novelty is not to be cured by novelty. Their "eye" may in the strictest sense be said, (Eccles. I. 8.) "not" to be "satisfied with seeing, nor" their "ear filled with hearing." It is really an insatiable appetite, and no sooner have they obtained the thing that they wished, but it ceases to be new, and they wish for something more.—It is besides commonly attended with great expense, enhances the price of things not for their real value and intrinsic worth and usefulness, but for their rarity and that imaginary value which the curious and luxurious set upon them.—It is likewise commonly attended with injustice, induces many men to mind the business and concerns of others to the neglect and detriment and ruin of their own, is at least a breach of civility and good manners, and doing unto others as we would by no means that they should do unto ourselves.—Moreover it is hurtful to states and communities as well as to single persons, erects

private men into politicians and censors of public affairs; renders people disobedient to government and desirous of new changes and revolutions; encourages foreign trade and manufactures to the prejudice of our own; exports our treasure and imports commodities the want whereof would be better than the supply; and is a dismal sign that a nation, howsoever learned and polite, is declining in arts and sciences, and patriotism and virtue, as the Athenians were, when this spirit prevailed most among them.

But its influence is the most pernicious and its effects the most fatal in religion. The Athenians, who were possessed with this spirit, were not the most ready to receive and embrace the gospel. Though St. Paul himself preached the word at Athens, yet his success there was not near so great as in other places. (ver. 32, 33.) "Some mocked, and others said, "We will hear thee again of this matter. So "Paul departed from among them." It is not a truly Christian spirit: and you will find it if not to be a principal cause yet at least a principal ingredient in all the heresies and schisms which have disturbed the peace of the Christian world. Religion is not the worse but the better for being old; (Heb. XIII. 8.) "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and to day "and for ever;" and that Church, which in doctrine and worship approacheth nearest to the primitive form and standard, is certainly the truest

truest and best: but it is the fault of human curiosity that it cannot rest satisfied with the divine simplicity of the gospel; and ever and anon there are some or others starting up under new sects and denominations, using a new cant and jargon of their own, inventing new interpretations, teaching new doctrines, superadding new precepts, affecting new modes of righteousness, pretending to new visions and inspirations, and boasting of uncommon sanctity and extraordinary communications and gifts of the holy Ghost without any evidences or credentials but their own confident assertions. Others, who are not of this wild enthusiastic turn, are of a sour phlegmatic temper, are continually finding fault with establishments, and proposing changes and alterations, exploding old forms, substituting new liturgies, new articles, new creeds, or rather no articles, no creeds, no religion at all. But all such innovators and innovations are best dismissed in the words of the prophet Jeremiah, (Jer. VI. 16.) "Thus saith the Lord, Stand ye in the ways and see and ask for the good old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Wherefore to conclude, (Heb. XIII. 9.) "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines." It is disobedience to the Church. It is undutifulness to the government. It is the sin of schism without any reasonable pretence for it. Frequent your own churches,

attend to your own pastors. You will hear from any of them better things than any of you will practise. Make no needless divisions and innovations. (1 Theff. IV. 11.) "Study to be quiet and to do your own business." Let it be your first care to know yourself, for that is of greater consequence than to know all the world. If you are desirous of newness of life, put away your old sins, and become (Gal. VI. 15.) "a new creature in Christ Jesus." And then if you are for extending your views farther, and delight in subjects which are always wonderful always new, contemplate the Supreme Being in his word and in his works, study scripture, study nature, and you will find enough to exercise your curiosity to all eternity. (Rom. XI. 33.) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out!" (Ecclus. XLIII. 27.) "We may speak much and yet come short, wherefore in sum he is all."

DISSERTATION XLII.

Against running in Debt.

IT is the method of St. Paul in most of his epistles, first to discuss some points of faith, and then in the conclusion to dictate several rules of practice. This method is observed particularly in his epistle to the Romans, in the first eleven chapters whereof he treateth at large of the privileges and advantages of the gospel above the law of Moses, and in the five remaining chapters recommends the most shining and exemplary morals to Christians. In the XIIIth chapter he presseth the duties of subjects to magistrates, of inferior persons to the superior powers, to which he subjoins another excellent rule of civil and social life, (ver. 8.) "Owe no man any thing but to love one another." *Owe no man any thing*; avoid running in debt as much as you possibly can; you who are clear, keep clear; and those who are under obligations, let them take the first opportunity to discharge them. And this precept was surely very seasonable in an age and in a nation, where general luxury had introduced general extravagance, and extravagance had created necessity and dependence; and we fear therefore is no less proper and seasonable
in

in these times than it was in the days of the apostle. But still there is a debt, that we shall always owe, and no receipts can ever totally acquit us, and that is love one to another. *Owe no man any thing but to love one another.* Love is the principal duty and distinguishing characteristic of a Christian; and we shall be the better enabled to discharge this debt, the clearer we stand of all others. Both parts of the precept are therefore well joined together. For nothing is usually a greater interruption to friendship, than being indebted and required to pay; men will differ about their money-affairs, yet agree very well in any thing else; and it is even grown proverbial, that the shortest reckonings make the longest friends. Wherefore “owe no man any thing but to love one another:” and is not the system of Christianity to be highly admired, that consults our temporal as well as our spiritual welfare; and not only instructs us in the sublimer truths of religion, but also promotes the peace and happiness of mankind in the common affairs of life? Let us then consider the precept more distinctly in both its branches, the prohibition of *owing* and injunction of *loving*, and show the inconveniences of all other debts, and the eternal obligations of the debt of love.

I. The prohibition of owing—*Owe no man any thing*—is not designed to lessen the intercourse and exchange of good offices between man and man. Christianity would rather promote

mote and encourage mutual kindnesſes and obligations, than any ways obſtruct or reſtrain them; and he muſt be a wonderfully happy or wonderfully unhappy man, who is indebted and obliged to no man for any thing. Neither doth the prohibition extend to all debts of money whatſoever without diſtinction; for there is no receiving or diſburſing ready caſh for every thing; there muſt neceſſarily be ſome truſt and confidence among men; it may happen ſometimes, that the wealthieſt perſons may have occaſion to borrow of their neighbours; and trade and commerce cannot be carried on without debtor and creditor. All that the prohibition would hinder is living above our fortune and circumſtances, and running in debt more than we can eaſily and certainly pay. For ſurely there is great *indignity* and *meanneſs* in running thus in debt; and a generous ſpirit cannot ſubmit to it without pain and reluctance. . It is indeed difficult to want, but is it not almoſt as difficult to borrow? and are not men uſually at a loſs whom to apply to upon the occaſion, and how to apply to him, aſhamed to aſk and afraid to be denied, and often proteſt and promiſe more than they are ever able to perform? When too the time of payment approaches, they find it perhaps more difficult to pay, than it was to borrow; and there is even greater *indignity* and *meanneſs* in not doing the one, than in doing the other. What fear and dread of the day of payment? How quickly

quickly all the intermediate time passeth away? What anxiety and expedients to procure a supply somewhere or other? and how do they begin then to repent, when it is too late, of all their vanity and extravagance? How many apologies and studied excuses for their want of punctuality? how many subterfuges and evasions to get rid of the importunity of a dun, and to put off the evil day of account a little longer? how often are they forced to abscond and lurk in secret places, are ashamed to look a friend in the face, and of all friends those especially to whom they are most indebted and most obliged? The *indignity* and *meanness* will tincture their whole behaviour. A man involved in debt appears little and insignificant in the eyes of the world. He cannot look with that openness and erection of countenance. He cannot speak or act with that dignity and freedom as another man. He feeleth himself degraded, sunk, and fallen; and He who might have lived with credit and reputation is reduced at last by his debts, perhaps to fly his native country, or perhaps to finish his days in prison. And rather than submit to all this indignity and meanness what man of any spirit or ingenuity would not be sure to live within the limits of his fortune; and be content with a little of his own rather than shine in all the borrowed feathers of others. Who would not prefer a morsel of bread with freedom to the highest living with the lowest dependency?

For

For as Solomon observes, (Prov. XXII. 7.) the
“ rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower
“ is servant to the lender.” As long as I am
able to pay for what I have, I am my own
master; but when I take up more than I can
pay, I become another’s slave.

But there is not only great *indignity* and
meannefs in running thus in debt, but likewise
great *immorality* and *injustice*; and it is doing
unto others as a man would by no means that
others should do unto him. A man who bor-
rows and expends more than he can ever pay is
really no better than a robber in mask and dis-
guise. He liveth as much upon the public,
and defrauds as much only in a civiler way.
Those also who can pay and wont pay are infi-
nitely worse than these who would perhaps if
they could. Some persons, I know not why,
take an ill-natured delight in making trading
and inferior people come after them several
times, appointing them day after day, before
they can find in their heart to satisfy them;
they think it not enough to be served, but they
must likewise be frequently attended by them.
But St. James (V. 4.) speaketh very severely of
such persons as were guilty in this kind;
“ Behold the hire of the laborers, who have
“ reaped down your fields, which is of you
“ kept back by fraud, crieth; and the cries of
“ them who have reaped are entred into the
“ ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.” If it be done
purposely, it is cruel and inhuman; if unde-
signedly,

signedly, it is rash and foolish : and you should consider with yourself, that the loss of so much time and attendance is something to them, though perhaps it may be nothing to you ; though the matter may be perfectly indifferent on one side, yet the disappointment may occasion infinite trouble and vexation on the other. Indeed you can properly call nothing your own, but what remains after all your debts are paid, and whatever you expend besides you have no right and title to ; it is not your own, but another's. Men running thus in debt are injurious to their families as well as to their creditors, and are neither just to their ancestors nor to their posterity. For no man should diminish his paternal estate, but rather improve it, and like a faithful steward to God and his family deliver it down in a better condition than he received it.

It is not only injurious to their own families in particular, but to all mankind in general. It destroys faith and credit among men ; and for one dishonest man many honest men are suspected and distrusted ; for (Ecclus. XXIX. 27.) “ many have refused to lend for other
“ mens ill dealing, fearing to be defrauded.” It inhances the price and value of every thing, and those who pay are forced to pay double and treble to supply the deficiencies of those who do not pay at all. It occasions continual quarrels and animosities ; for if their friend refuse to lend, they are offended ; and if he require his

his own again, then too they are offended; and we shall rarely know a debtor to love, but almost always to fear or hate his creditors. As the wise man says (ver. 5, 6.) "Till he hath received, he will kiss a man's hand, and for his neighbour's money he will speak submissively? but when he should repay, he will prolong the time, and return words of grief; he payeth him with cursings and railings, and for honor he will pay him disgrace." It is no less prejudicial and ruinous to public societies, than to single persons and private families. For men in debt are ripe for any enterprises, they must be glad of all changes and revolutions, and are ready to sell their conscience and their country to the best bidder. The Romans were very sensible of this, to whom St. Paul addresses his epistle, they knew by long experience that public virtue depended very much upon private independency, that Curio in opulence was quite a different man from Curio in debt; the immense sums which he owed made him sell himself to Cæsar, and from an advocate of liberty become an abetter and instrument of tyranny. Who were the chief (1) associates of Cataline in that wicked conspiracy so famous in history, but men who had wasted their own fortunes, and were greatly indebted to others? and what was Cataline himself but a man overwhelmed in debt, greedy

(1) Quicumque bona patria grande conflaverat. Alieni ap-
laceraverat quique alienum æs petens, sui profusus. Sallust.

of others wealth and profuse of his own? It is the more provoking, and the greater aggravation of the crime, as it is seldom mens real wants and necessities, but their vices and vanities which involve them in debts and difficulties; and where one man is undone by his misfortunes, twenty are ruined by their own fault.

Is there not then very good reason for the prohibition, "Owe no man any thing?" Let nothing tempt you to exceed your income and to spend more than you can really afford. Think it a less shame to want than to run in debt; and rather be without a thing, than obtain it by any dishonest or dishonorable means. Think it a greater honor to pay every one his own, than to wear the finest dress or appear in the gayest equipage that remains yet to be accounted for. The best thing is not to borrow or run in debt, and the next best is to pay as soon as ever you can, and let no man come twice for his money. Be punctual always to your time, for it is a most excellent quality; and though some men regard it as a light thing, yet it is a very essential virtue, and there can be no honor nor honesty without it. As the son of Sirach says, (Ecclus. IV. 31. XXIX. 2, 3.) "Let
 " not thine hand be stretched out to receive,
 " and shut when thou shouldest repay. Lend
 " to thy neighbour in time of his need, and
 " pay thou thy neighbour again in due season;
 " Keep thy word and deal faithfully with him,
 " and

“and thou shalt always find the thing that is
“necessary for thee.”

II. But there is an injunction of *loving* as well as a prohibition of *owing*; and in this sense we shall always be debtors; and having shown the inconveniences of all other debts, we now proceed to show the eternal obligations of the debt of love.

We are obliged to it as we are *men*, and it is a debt even to nature. For some degree of tenderness and compassion is wrought into our very frame and constitution, and is so agreeable to our nature, that we call it *humanity* and *good-nature*; and the contrary temper we call *inhumanity* as if it divested us of manhood, and *ill-nature* as being a depravation and corruption of nature. A man of humanity cannot help being moved at the relation only of some great distress; and we are much more deeply affected, when we ourselves are eye-witnesses of it; our eyes pay their tribute of tears, our bowels yearn, our hearts melt and sink within us; and we must be hard-hearted monsters to resist all the feelings and inclinations of nature, or stupid wretches indeed not to be sensible of these tender impressions. And why hath nature formed us with these sympathies and affections, but that we might be the more incited to do good, not only as our duty but for the very pleasure that attends it. Sweetness to the palate, fragrancy to the smell, music to the hearing, beauty to the sight is not more

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pleasing and amiable than generous and charitable actions to the mind. To relieve another is really an act of kindness to ourselves: it is some comfort and satisfaction only to have designed a generous thing; but when we have put it in execution, how are we pleased and delighted with ourselves! What inward complacency and transport of heart do we feel! what flow of spirits! and what harmony of soul! The good we enjoy is even greater than we bestow, and we find experimentally the truth of that saying of our Saviour, mentioned by St. Paul, (Acts XX. 35.) "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

We are likewise obliged to love one another as we are *social* creatures; and the circumstances of mankind require it of us, and the constitution of the world as well as our own. For no man is made perfect and all-sufficient for his own happiness. We depend continually one upon another for the comforts and conveniences of life. Those who are the most accomplished in some respects may yet be very deficient in others; and those of inferior degree and meaner attainments may yet be serviceable to the world in one capacity or other. (1 Cor. XII. 21, &c.) "The eye cannot say to the hand I have no need of thee, nor again the head to the feet I have no need of you; nay much more those members of the body which seem to be more feeble are necessary." And why hath "God" thus "tempered

"tempered the body together," but "that," as the apostle saith, "there should be no schism in the body, and the members should have the same care one for another." The reason of God's thus dividing his talents severally to every man is that we might thereby be convinced of the absolute necessity of society and dependence upon one another; and the bond of all society is mutual love, friendship and charity. And as different men are distinguished by their different talents, so likewise are different countries by their different productions, that there might be a circulation of benefits, and correspondence and commerce might be maintained among them. Bands of robbers and pirates cannot subsist, nor hold together without some affection and fidelity to each other. (Mark III. 24, 25.) "A kingdom cannot stand" no nor a "house, if it be divided against itself." Love therefore is a debt that we owe to society, and the greater advantages any one enjoys in the community, the more is he obliged to consult and promote its welfare.

We are farther obliged to it in *common equity*, and we owe it unto others as we ourselves should expect it from others. For no doubt you are very desirous, and think it most highly reasonable, that all men should behave towards you with humanity and civility, with good-nature and good manners; that they should be tender of your life and health, and what per-

haps you value as much as life and health, your honor and reputation; that they should use you with fairness and honesty, with punctuality and exactness in all their dealings and commerce with you; that upon occasion they should be ready to relieve and assist you; that in case of any failure or mistake they should not be severe to mark what is done amiss and triumph over you, but should endeavor to set you right in the spirit of meekness, and be willing to forgive and forget any former offenses upon your submission and desire of reconciliation: and if you think it reasonable for all men to behave thus towards you, must not you think it equally reasonable for you to behave thus towards all men? and when you shall act otherwise, must you not necessarily be condemned by the judgment of your own mind? There is the same human nature in another man that is in you; and the greatest may say of the meanest in the words of Job; (XXXI. 15.) "Did not he, that made me in the womb, make him? and did not one fashion us?" Whatever other differences subsist among men, still there is no difference as to the rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Man is to man a kind of another self; and "not to deal his bread to the hungry and cover the naked" is by an elegant phrase of Isaiah (LVIII. 7.) "to hide himself from his own flesh."

Moreover

Moreover it is a debt unto *God*, and we are obliged to it in obedience to the divine will and in imitation of the divine nature. Our duty and gratitude to God require us to employ the talents, which he hath given us, for the benefit and advantage of mankind; for our goodness extendeth not to God, and we have no other way of being serviceable to him, or making any suitable return for all the blessings of life, but by communicating of the good things we enjoy to our fellow-creatures: and whoever oppresseth or despiseth any man may very properly be said in the language of Solomon (Prov. XIV. 31.) “to reproach his maker.” If there was no divine revelation, yet the voice of reason, and the whole frame of nature, every thing without us and every thing within us loudly proclaim this to be one of the primary and fundamental laws: and God who is himself all love and goodness cannot but be pleased with those of his creatures, who shall endeavor to copy after him in these amiable perfections. Nothing certainly can be a greater honor and advancement to human nature, than to imitate and resemble the divine, (Luke VI. 36.) to “be merciful as our Father also is merciful;” (Matt. V. 48.) “to be perfect even as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.” (1 John IV. 16.) “God is love and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.”

We are still more particularly obliged to it as we are *Christians*, and our holy religion hath carried the arguments and motives to universal love and charity higher than ever they were carried by any system of morality or religion in the world. For we are not only obliged to it by the ties of common humanity, as we are men, and partakers of the same human nature, and perhaps members of the same body politic; but we are farther to look upon ourselves as brethren in a more eminent and peculiar manner, being all the children of God in Christ, all partakers of the same blessed spirit, all heirs of the same eternal inheritance, all members of the same spiritual body in Christ Jesus; and (1 Cor. XII. 26.) “whether one member
“suffer, all the members suffer with it, or
“one member be honored, all the members
“rejoice with it.” We are not only obliged to it by the general example of God’s love and goodness manifested in the works of the creation, preservation, and providence; but we have likewise a more particular example in the singular love of God and of Christ discovered in the redemption and restoration of lost mankind to everlasting happiness. For (1 John IV. 10, 11.) “herein is love, not that we
“loved God, but that he loved us and sent
“his Son to be the propitiation for our sins;
“and beloved if God so loved us we ought also
“to love one another.” (III. 16.) “Hereby
“perceive we the love of God, because he laid
“down

“ down his life for us ; and we ought to lay
“ down our lives for the brethren.” We are
not only obliged to it by the will and command
of God collected from the nature of things,
and from the nature of man, and from the na-
ture and attributes of God ; but it is more-
over the exprefs law and command of God
pressed and inculcated with the greatest plain-
ness and emphasis in almost every page of the
gospel ; and it is made the distinguishing mark
and criterion of a true Christian ; for “ by
“ this” says our blessed Saviour (John XIII.
35.) “ shall all men know that ye are my dis-
“ ciples, if ye have love one for another.” It
is therefore called by the apostle (1 Tim. I. 5.)
“ the end of the commandment,” (Rom.
XIII. 10.) “ the fulfilling of the law,” (Col.
III. 14.) “ the bond of perfectness :” and all
other excellences and pretences to religion
whatever are vain without it, for (1 Cor. XIII.
1, 2.) “ though I speak with the tongues of
“ men and of angels, and though I have all
“ faith, so that I could remove mountains and
“ have no charity, I am nothing.” Through
the merits of Christ it will atone for lesser of-
fenses, will (1 Pet. IV. 8.) “ cover the mul-
“ titude of sins :” and in the next world the
principal inquiry will be what works of mercy
and charity we have done to our brethren, and
our Saviour promises to reward them as done
to himself ; for (Matt. XXV. 40.) “ verily I
“ say unto you, In as much as ye have done it

“ unto the least of these my brethren, ye have
“ done it unto me.”

Wherefore “ owe no man any thing but to
“ love one another.” Avoid the former, that
you may be the better able to perform the
latter; for a man involved in debt can have
little or nothing to bestow in charity. Be ge-
nerous, but be generous of what is your own.
Charity is a most divine quality, but there can
be no true charity without justice. First do
justice, and then show mercy. The one is not
sufficient without the other: (Mic. VI. 8.)

“ He hath showed thee O man what is good;
“ and what doth the Lord require of thee,
“ but to do justly and to love mercy and to
“ walk humbly with thy God?” It is a very
short, but very complete character of a bad
and a good man, that is given by the royal
psalmist, and with that I will conclude, (Psal.
XXXVII. 21.) “ The wicked borroweth and
“ payeth not again, but the righteous sheweth
“ mercy and giveth.”

DISSERTATION XLIII.

St. PAUL's Description of Charity.

IN the XIIIth Chapter of St. Paul's 1st Epistle to the Corinthians we have the finest description of Charity that was ever drawn by the pen of man, or even by the Holy Ghost himself. The Corinthians, to whom this Epistle was addressed, were divided it seemeth into sects and parties, on account of their spiritual gifts which were the best and whose should have the precedence; and this vain rivalry and competition of theirs had occasioned no little disorder and confusion in the church. To remedy this disorder the apostle applies several persuasive arguments in the foregoing chapter; and in the conclusion of it he acquaints them, that he will show unto them "a more excellent way" than this contending for superiority of gifts, "You covet earnestly the best gifts," saith he, "and yet show I unto you "a more excellent way:" and this more excellent way we find by the words immediately following is "Charity" or more properly *universal love and benevolence*, for which there is scarce any one adequate word in any language.

He preferreth it to the tongues of men and of angels, and he speaketh with more than the
tongues

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tongues of men and of angels to recommend and adorn it. (ver. 1.) " Though I speak with
 " the tongues of men and of angels, and have
 " not charity, I am become as sounding brass
 " or a tinkling cymbal." Eloquence without good sense is nothing better than an empty sound. Eloquence may excite applause and admiration; but without benevolence without goodness it can never acquire love and esteem. It only renders a man so much the more formidable and dangerous.

Nay not only eloquence, but what is much better the greatest degree of knowlege, and even faith so as to work miracles without charity are nothing worth. (ver. 2.) " And though
 " I have the gift of prophecy, and understand
 " all mysteries and all knowlege, and though
 " I have all faith, so that I could remove
 " mountains, and have not charity, I am no-
 " thing." These extraordinary gifts and endowments, if accompanied with ill nature and malevolence, will only increase a man's guilt, and add tenfold to his condemnation. Knowledge should soften and refine our manners, faith should make us better men as well as better christians; but if they produce the contrary effect, we had better live and die in ignorance and unbelief. The devil hath all the natural abilities and perfections of an arch-angel, but yet remains a devil still, and is the most hated and detested being in the universe, because the most hateful and destructive.

Nay

Nay what is better than all knowlege, the greatest acts of liberality and bounty to the poor, and the strongest proof of faith, the suffering of martyrdom for our religion, will avail us nothing without charity. (ver. 3.) "And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." Indeed *charity* in the vulgar use and acceptation of the word denotes alms-giving; and alms-giving if rightly performed is no doubt one principal branch of charity. But the word *αγαπή* in scripture never once that I know of signifies that particular branch of charity, *alms-giving*; but always signifies *love* or *charity* in general: and in this place the apostle manifestly distinguisheth alms-giving from charity, and supposeth that a man may spend all his substance in the one, and yet be wholly destitute of the other. If we relieve the poor out of any bad principle or for any bad end, if like the Pharisees (Matt. VI. 2.) we "sound a trumpet" before us when we do our alms, that we may "have glory of men;" then is our alms-giving properly no charity, is so far from being a virtue that it is a fault, and whatever reward we may have for it from men, we shall have none at all from "our Father which is in heaven."

Charity, the scripture charity, is not so much the outward act, as the inward habit and disposition of mind. It is a vital active principle,

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ciple, possesses and animates the whole man, inspires all his thoughts, breathes in all his words, lives in all his actions. It comprehends more, as I before observed, than we can well express in any one word, and therefore we are obliged to make use of several, love, charity, gentleness, kindness, goodness of nature, sweetness of temper, benevolence and beneficence to the whole creation. But we shall judge the better of it by taking a distinct view of several parts of the description.

“Charity suffereth long.” (ver. 4.) It is the character of God in scripture (2 Pet. III. 9.) to be “long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance;” and charity herein imitates and resembles the divine nature; is “slow to wrath,” as St. James speaketh (I. 19.); is not apt to kindle into passion and anger; is patient of contradiction; beareth with provocation after provocation, with injury after injury; and forgiveth a brother “not only (Matt. XVIII. 22.) until seven times, but until seventy times seven.”

Charity not only suffereth long, but “is kind;” not only is slow in taking offense, but studiously avoids giving any; not only not renders evil for evil, but overcomes evil with good; is not kind by fits and starts, at certain seasons and to certain persons only, but is kind absolutely, at all times and to all persons; is not kind out of interest and in hopes of a return, but is kind out of kindness, and doeth good for the love of
of

of doing good ; stayeth not to be solicited and teased into doing a favor, but often prevents the wishes and desires of others, and affords relief before they can ask it ; thinketh it not enough never to do any hurt, but must continually be doing some good ; and is so far from making any one uneasy, that it contributes its utmost to make mankind universally happy.

“ Charity envieth not ; ” is never disturbed, never repines at the superior accomplishments and advantages of others in any kind ; but on the contrary giveth honor to whom honor is due, and esteems the blessings of others in a manner its own blessings ; and by these means doubles the pleasures of life, rejoicing continually with them that rejoice.

“ Charity vaunteth not itself ; ” the word in the original, *καταφρονεῖ*, is of doubtful and uncertain signification, but commentators generally expound, that as charity “ envieth not ” others abilities, so neither will it suffer us to be ostentatious of our own ; that it is not forward and assuming ; that it is not for meddling with things above one's sphere and capacity, but maketh a man able to say with the good psalmist (CXXXI. 1, &c.) “ Lord, “ my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes “ lofty, neither do I exercise myself in great “ matters or in things too high for me ; surely “ I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child “ that is weaned of his mother ; my soul is “ even as a weaned child.”

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“Is not puffed up;” as it maketh no pretensions to what it hath not, so neither is it proud of what it really hath; is not swelled and blown up with success and applause; corrects all that vanity by which we are apt to be full of ourselves and regardless of others, to lean too much to our own understanding and despise the opinion and advice of others; extinguisheth every spark of self-conceit, and suffereth us “not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think,” (Rom. XII. 3.) but teacheth us “to think soberly.”

“Doth not behave itself unseemly;” (ver. 5.) this is no more than a consequence of the former, for all haughtiness and insolence of carriage proceed from vanity and fulness of heart; and as charity hath no pride inwardly, so it betrays none outwardly in look or word or action; is never guilty of any indecency or ill manners, never for the sake of saying something smart saith any thing rude or offensive; hath a natural grace and amiableness in behaviour, to superiors is very respectful, very complaisant to equals, to inferiors very obliging, treateth all mankind with civility, and is all that really and at the bottom which good breeding is artificially and in appearance. For as a late excellent (1) author observes, “if we examine thoroughly the idea of what we call good breeding, we shall find it to be nothing else, but an imitation and mimicry of good na-

(1) Mr. Addison.

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"ture, or in other terms, affability complaisance and easiness of temper reduced into an art." And indeed what doth the very name of a *Gentleman* imply, but humanity and gentleness, good nature and good manners?

"Seeketh not her own;" is above any selfish views, any personal interests contrary to the public; looketh not upon a man's self to be born for himself, or his own private good to be made the center and circumference of his actions; will not always punctually insist upon its right, will lose its own in some cases rather than break christian peace, and occasion any trouble and disturbance; will "rather take wrong," as St. Paul adviseth, (1 Cor. VI. 7.) will "rather suffer itself to be defrauded" in lesser matters, than "go to law" upon every occasion; or as our Saviour expresseth the same sentiment, (Matt. V. 39, 40.) "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, will turn to him the other also, and if any man will sue thee at the law and take away thy coat, will let him have thy cloak also."

"Is not easily provoked;" or rather as the word should be rendered, "is not highly provoked;" for the character of *not being easily provoked* is hardly distinguishable from the first mentioned property of charity, that it *suffereth long*; and the original word in this place (*οὐ παροξυνεῖται*) plainly imports, that charity doth not fall into *paroxysms*, into sharp and violent fits of passion and anger. So that it not only
suffereth

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suffereth long, not only is not *easily* provoked; but even when it is provoked, is not provoked *immoderately* and beyond due bounds and limits; it seldom indeed discovers any emotion of anger, but if upon any just occasion it happens to be angry, it taketh care (Eph. IV. 26.) to “be angry and sin not, never letteth the sun go down upon its wrath,” never flieth out into harsh intemperate expressions, but maketh (Philip. IV. 5.) its “moderation to be known unto all men.”

“Thinketh no evil;” not only formeth no ill designs, harbours no malicious thoughts against any man, as some understand the words; but also, as others more probably interpret them, suspects evil of no man, putteth the most favorable construction upon every thing, and is so far from saying severe things that it will not give us leave so much as to think amiss of any body, till we are perfectly forced to it.

“Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;” (ver. 6.) as it thinketh no evil itself, so neither is it pleased that others should think evil, unjustly of any man; detests every thing of scandal and defamation, is an enemy to all nameless libellers and libels, on the contrary is glad to have false reports detected, misrepresentations set right, and injured innocence vindicated; in any argument, in any controversy of religious or civil concern is never delighted in hearing law or equity scrip-
ture

ture or reason perverted and abused, but on the contrary always loveth to have justice distributed and right prevail; and as the beloved and loving apostle declares of himself, (3 John 4.) "hath no greater joy than to hear that men walk in truth;" is not so far partaker in other mens sins as to take pleasure in them, but on the contrary delights in the practice of universal righteousness, would have men as much as is possible live like angels and earth be the image of heaven.

"Beareth all things;" (ver. 7.) by *all things* in this verse common sense and the common forms of speech will instruct us are not meant simply all, but only all such as are consistent with the nature and end of charity. "Beareth all things," or rather "covereth all things," throweth a veil over the failings and infirmities of men, and conceals all the evil we know unless it be greater charity to reveal it: "believeth all things," not only *thinketh no evil* as was said before, but is also willing to *believe* all the good that it hath any reasonable ground to believe: "hopeth all things," and even where there is not sufficient ground to *believe* good of a man, it still forbeareth not to *hope* good of him, and doth not absolutely despair of his amendment: "endureth all things," beareth with almost any thing in this labor of love, and doth not finally give a man over and abandon him to himself, till his case becomes manifestly desperate and past remedy.

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Such is St. Paul's description of charity; and we see it comprehends almost all the moral and social virtues. As the celebrated Mr. Chillingworth (2) remarks, "*It suffereth long,*" and so 'tis longanimity; *it is kind,* and so 'tis courtesy; *it vaunteth not itself,* and so 'tis modesty; *it is not puffed up,* and so 'tis humility; *it is not easily provoked,* and so 'tis lenity; *it thinketh no evil,* and so 'tis simplicity; *it rejoiceth in the truth,* and so 'tis verity; *it beareth all things,* and so 'tis fortitude; *it believeth all things,* and so 'tis faith; *it hopeth all things,* and so 'tis confidence; *it endureth all things,* and so 'tis patience." And what is the reverse of all this, but hatred, malevolence, ill-nature, or what else can we call it? Ill-nature is impatient and unkind, ill-nature envieth, ill-nature vaunteth itself, is puffed up, behaveth itself unseemly, is selfish, is of violent strong passions and deep resentment, designs evil itself and suspects evil of others, rejoiceth not in the truth but rejoiceth in false defamations, covereth nothing, believeth nothing, hopeth nothing, endureth nothing.

Another supereminent perfection of charity still remains to be considered. The apostle had said before that all spiritual gifts, the speaking with tongues, and prophecy, and all knowledge were nothing worth without charity: and here he prefers it on account of its longer dura-

(2) Sermon 2.

tion, for charity will accompany us into the next life, and flourish to all eternity, whereas these other imperfect gifts belonging only to this imperfect state cease together with it, (ver. 8.) "Charity never faileth: but whether
" there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether
" there be tongues, they shall cease; whether
" there be knowledge it shall vanish away." Upon which the apostle somewhat enlargeth, as we shall have a fitter opportunity of doing hereafter; and then closeth his description with this memorable encomium; (ver. 13.) "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three, but the greatest of these is charity." Nothing greater can be said in commendation of this virtue, and therefore it is properly reserved to the last place to leave the strongest impression on the minds of the Corinthians.

Now charity may be said to be greater than faith or hope, 1st because it is of more use to a man's self, 2dly because it is more beneficial to others, 3dly because it is of longer duration, and lastly because it maketh us more like the standard of all perfection, God himself. And indeed what can give the præminence to one quality above others more justly than its being the most useful, the most generous, the most durable, the most godlike and divine?

1. Charity is of more use and advantage to a man's self than his faith or hope. For it contributes more to the quiet and repose of the

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mind than either of the other two. A man may have faith and hope in a great degree, and yet be a restless turbulent creature; "the" very "devils believe," as St. James (II. 19.) informs us, and yet their belief alters not their diabolical nature; but charity husheth and layeth asleep all the rougher passions, and establisheth a perfect serenity and calm within. Faith and hope are at best but the beginnings of a good life, but charity is the end and completion of it. Charity is truly, as the apostle calleth it, (1 Tim. I. 5.) "the end of the" "commandment," (Rom. XIII. 10.) "the" "fulfilling of the law," and (Col. III. 14.) "the bond of perfectness." Besides its yielding greater comfort and delight to one's own mind, it raiseth the more lovely idea of one in the minds of others, and so tendeth to his greater honor and advantage. A man may be perhaps admired for his faith and hope; but for his good works only, for his charity is he loved. He who soweth good things, is most likely to reap good things. Those who have it in their power will do well to him; and those who have it not in their power will still wish well to him, and (Job XXIX. 29.) "the" "blessings of him that was ready to perish" "will come upon him." Charity is universally acknowledged the same, and naturally gaineth esteem and reverence in all ages and countries: but the notion of faith varies with times and climates, and what is magnified as orthodoxy

orthodoxy on one side of a sea or mountain, is persecuted as heresy on the other. Charity not only doeth a man more service when he is living, but will also stand him in better stead when he shall come to die. There is no possible instance where faith and hope can save a man alone without charity; but there may be found an instance (for instance in a state of invincible ignorance) where charity alone may save a man without faith or hope. A man may be destitute of faith merely through his misfortune; but it must altogether be his fault, if he is void of charity: And his faith too will be an aggravation of his want of charity, but his charity may in some cases perhaps be an alleviation of his want of faith. Certain it is that at the day of judgment it will not be so much inquired what we have believed as what we have done; and by our words and works chiefly we shall be justified or condemned.

2. Charity is more beneficial to others as well as of more use to a man's self than his faith or hope. A man believeth for himself, and hopeth for himself; his faith and hope are all for his own sake: but charity is of a more extensive generous nature, and in the very notion of it implies doing good to others. Those qualities are somewhat like a light in a dark lanthorn, that shineth only to him who holdeth it; but charity diffuseth itself like the sun, and scatters light and heat on all around and

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beneath it. The world may chance to be a gainer by charity without faith; but it will never be the better, and I fear always the worse for faith without charity. It is such faith as this (faith working not by love) that thunders out her anathemas on all who differ from her, that erects inquisitions, foments massacres and rebellions, and occasions much effusion of the blood of Christians by the hands of Christians: but charity maketh men like brethren dwell together in unity, (Col. III. 13.) "forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any."

3. Charity is not only of more use to a man's self, and more beneficial to others, but is likewise of longer duration than faith or hope. Faith and hope are more proper to this world, for in the next world faith in great measure will be lost in vision, and hope in great measure will be swallowed up in enjoyment: but charity is not confined to this or that state, and like our souls is immortal and endureth for ever. "Charity never faileth; but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowlege, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part; but when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away." Faith and hope imply something of want and imperfection, the former a want of something to be known, the latter

latter a want of something to be enjoyed, and therefore they belong more properly to this imperfect state: but charity accompanies us into the next world, as it is the very temper of happiness, and we must not only be happy with it, but there is no being happy without it. And as faith and hope are proper to this state, so in this state too they may be exercised to perfection: but charity is infinite in its degrees as well as in its duration; it is continually improving, and is still capable of farther improvement, as the sea is always filling but never filled.

4. Charity, besides its being a more useful, a more generous, a more durable, is also a more divine quality than faith or hope, and maketh us more like the standard of all perfection, God himself. Men may talk much of divine faith and divine hope, and in a certain sense they are so: but it is charity, it is love that properly speaking is divine. Faith and hope have no place in the Supreme Being; for where is perfect knowledge, there is not faith but certainty; and where is perfect happiness, there is not hope but enjoyment: but the darling attributes of the Deity, the attributes in which he delights are mercy and goodness, and in scripture language God is not only said to love us, but is more than once (1 John IV. 8. and 16.) stiled "love" itself. And consequently let our faith and hope be never so great, yet they are not at all godlike; we may indeed show

our obedience to God by a proper exercise of these qualities, but by these qualities alone we can never resemble him; but now in being charitable we not only obey him but imitate him, we not only act according to his will but likewise in conformity to his example; we are made (2 Pet. I. 4.) "partakers of the divine nature," and become, as our Saviour speaketh (Matt. V, 45.) "the children of our Father which is in heaven." We may likewise observe that the more any beings resemble God in other perfections, the more they resemble him too in love and goodness. The holy angels, beings much higher and nobler than ourselves, do yet delight (Heb. I. 14.) "to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation;" and there is always (Luke XV. 10.) "joy in their presence over one sinner that repenteth." The Son of God, as he is (Heb. I. 3.) "the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person," so hath he given us the greatest instance of love that can possibly be conceived, (1 John III. 16.) "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The faithful are the children of Abraham, but the charitable are the children of the most Highest. Our faith and hope may make us perhaps martyrs and confessors; but charity raiseth us still higher, and maketh us as good as angels, as saviours, as
 gods

gods in a manner one to another. Charity must needs be the great perfection of the human nature, since it is the great perfection of the divine; and it is somewhat remarkable, that what in St. Matthew (V. 48.) is *perfect*, "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," in the parallel place in St. Luke (VI. 36.) is *merciful*, "Be ye therefore merciful as your Father also is merciful."

You must be sensible by this time what a comprehensive, and what an excellent virtue Christian Charity is: and certainly much may be said to recommend so truly amiable a quality, setting aside the consideration of its being our duty so strictly enjoined and so frequently inculcated in the gospel; for doubtless it is the best way to make a man easy in himself as well as more agreeable to others, to possess his own soul in peace and harmony as well as gain upon the love and affection of all who know him. A man in the most prosperous circumstances of life can never rightly enjoy himself, as long as his mind is not at ease; and his mind can never be at ease, as long as he is under the dominion of his passion, as long as he is peevish and ill-natured. Ill-nature galleth and fretteth the spirits, and like a vulture within gnaweth upon the very vitals. But the good-natured, good-tempered man hath the fairest title to inward peace and happiness, as he is the freest from all those jarring passions, which render a
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man's self a burthen and torment to himself. His mind is seldom out of tune. You usually find him cheerful and easy, and there are few things in life which can ruffle and disturb him. Whatever troubles and storms are raised from without, yet generally all is serene and calm within. As there is no being easy in one's self, so there is no being agreeable to others, without a sweet obliging temper and behaviour. "The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit," as St. Peter calleth it, (1 Pet. III. 4.) "is" in some degree in men as well as in women, and in the esteem of the world as well as "in the sight of God, of great price." A man's power and authority may gain him the outward respect and reverence of mankind, but all the power and authority in the world without goodness cannot engage their hearts and affections. The generous good tempered benevolent man loveth every body, and justly therefore is he by every body beloved.

Much I say may be said to recommend this excellent quality upon civil, but still more upon religious considerations; much as it is a point of worldly prudence, but still more as it is matter of strict indispensable duty. I know there are several who look upon good temper as an amiable quality indeed, but as a quality that is born with us; and therefore they trouble not their heads much about it. If they have it, it is happy for them; if they have it not, it is the defect of their nature, and they
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can no more help it than any natural deformity of body. Now it must be admitted, that some men are naturally of a better temper than others; but this is no more an argument that all are not obliged to be good-tempered, than it is an argument that all are not obliged to be chaste and temperate, because some men are naturally of warmer constitutions, and have larger stomachs than other people. The virtue may be more difficult in the one case than in the other, but still it is equally our duty; and whatever our natural complexions and constitutions may be, we are alike bound to observe it. If we have nature on our side, our work will be the easier; but however it is a necessary work, though nature be against us. The faults and vices of nature may be corrected and must be corrected. To yield to our natural temper will not make our sin no sin, but to overcome our natural temper will make our virtue greater virtue; render it more illustrious here, and intitle it to a more glorious reward hereafter. Besides, a man cannot be perfectly good-tempered by the force of nature alone, any more than by the strength of genius alone he can be a finished author in any kind. Nature may plant, art may water, but religion must give the increase.

Let not men therefore neglect this great duty, and much less let them pretend to deride and despise it. Good-nature with its kindred virtues, meekness mildness forbearance
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giveness tenderness pity and the like, is grown proverbial among some sorts of people for folly and indiscretion. But the greatest vulgar errors are often couched in old proverbs. It is so far from being a sign of weakness or folly; that on the contrary I believe it will be found true, that wherever is thorough good-nature, there always is there always must be thorough good sense. There are men of sense indeed, who yet are not men of temper; but in this at least they do not show their good sense, how much soever they may have in other matters. And generally speaking the men of the greatest understanding, the ablest masters and performers in every kind, are the most remarkable instances of candor and humanity. Fools are always wayward and perverse; and the more you know of their temper, the worse you like them. Surely to be always cheerful and easy, to preserve a serene even temper, neither too much dejected on the one hand, nor too much elated on the other, is wisdom and the highth of wisdom. Little minds can resent an injury, great ones only can forgive and forget. If good-nature be a weakness, it is the weakness of the most elevated souls, the weakness of the blessed angels, and of the divine nature itself. For (1 John IV. 16.) "God is love; and he
" that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and
" God in him."

But can any apology be wanting, or rather is not the highest commendation to be bestowed

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ed on this the quintessence and perfection of all virtues? Faith and hope are excellent things, but charity is still more excellent. And how unreasonably then and preposterously do those men and societies of men act, who contend for articles of faith to the violation of charity, and in order to establish the belief of what they call Christianity in the world, subvert the very principles of humanity! This is manifestly to prefer the less to the greater; this is for the sake of the means to forget the end, and to root up the foundation for the better support of the building. "By this," saith our Saviour (John XIII. 35.) "shall all men know that you are my disciples if ye have love one for another." Charity is the characteristic of our religion, and therefore the principal stress is to be laid upon charity. (Tit. III. 8.) "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works." All other marks of religion without good works are vain and ineffectual. We do well indeed to believe in the divine promises, and to hope for the divine rewards; we do well indeed to frequent the church, to say our prayers and receive the blessed sacrament; but notwithstanding all this religion, if we have "not fed" the hungry, if we have "not cloathed" the naked, if we have "not visited" the sick, our Saviour will say unto us, (Matt. XXV. 41, &c.) "Depart
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“ Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting
“ fire prepared for the devil and his angels.”
The want of charity will damn us, when all
the faith, all the hope in the world will not
save us.

Let us therefore believe in God, let us hope
in God, but above all let us endeavor to be like
God. The best worship of God is the imita-
tion of him; the most acceptable sacrifices we
can pay to him, “ the sacrifices with which he
“ is well pleased, (Heb. XIII. 16.) are to do
“ good and to communicate:” And (James I.
27.) “ pure religion and undefiled before God
“ and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless
“ and widows in their affliction, and to keep
“ himself unspotted from the world.” Faith
and hope are good in their kind, but charity is
goodness itself. Nay faith and hope are only
so far good as they work by love; hope with-
out it is arrogance, and faith without is the
faith of devils. (James II. 19, 20.) “ Thou
“ believest that there is one God, thou doest
“ well; the devils also believe and tremble:
“ But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith
“ without works is dead?” and no works like
works of mercy and goodness. To these are
made the most glorious promises, to the want
of these are denounced the most terrible threat-
nings in scripture. (Matt. V. 7.) “ Blessed are
“ the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy;”
but (James II. 13.) “ he shall have judgment
“ without mercy that hath showed no mercy.”

Remember this, and show yourselves Men and Christians. Humanity and kindness are our duty as we are Men, and more particularly as we are Christians. The Christian religion is the best-natured institution in the world, and Christ the most perfect pattern of love and charity. This he practised living and dying, and this he commands in every page of his gospel. (Col. III. 12.) "Put on therefore (as the elect of God, holy and beloved) bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering:" And (Eph. IV. 31 & 32.) "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking be put away from you with all malice; And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

DISSERTATION XLIV.

On knowing ourselves.

KNOW thyself (1) was a precept in such repute among the Heathen moralists, that they ascribed it to the oracle of the wisest of

(1) Γνωθι σεαυτον. Nosce teipsum.

A cœlo descendit γυνθι σεαυτον.

their

their gods. And as the scattered virtuous sentiments of the Heathen morality are collected and transplanted into Christianity, so we see this particularly adopted by St. Paul; (2 Cor. XIII. 5.) "Examin yourselves whether ye be
 " in the faith, prove your own selves; know
 " ye not your own selves?"

Now the knowledge of ourselves here recommended is not a physical knowledge, but a moral; a knowledge not of our mechanical frame and constitution, but of our hearts and affections; a knowledge not of what is the bond or cement that uniteth soul and body, and formeth their mutual action and passion; not what is the seat and as one may say the presence-chamber of the soul, whether in the brain, or in the heart, or diffused over the body; not what is the cause of memory, what of reflection, what of volition, and of the other powers and faculties of our souls: but a knowledge of what are the secret springs, which set us on work, and excite our joys and griefs, our hopes and fears, our desires and aversions; what is the main scope and end that we propose to ourselves in all our thoughts words and actions; what are the distinguishing characters and properties of our souls, in which we
 differ

(2) Est illud quidem vel Non enim credo id præcipit,
 maximum animo ipso animum ut membra nostra aut staturam
 videre; et nimirum hanc habet figuramve noscamus: neque
 vim præceptum Apollinis, quo nos corpora sumus; neque ego
 monet ut se quisque noscat. tibi dicens hoc corpori tuo dico.
 Cum

differ as much one from another, as in our outward features and the lineaments of our faces.

Such is the knowlege here recommended, and to this purpose speaketh (2) one of the best and wisest of the heathen philosophers. ' It is the greatest piece of art with the mind ' itself to see the mind ; and this is the force ' and meaning of that precept of Apollo, in ' which he adviseth that every one should ' know himself. For he doth not, I suppose, ' give this precept, that we should know our ' limbs or stature or figure. Neither are we ' bodies, nor do I speaking this speak it to ' thy body. When therefore he saith Know ' thyself, he saith Know thy mind. For the ' body is as it were the vessel and receptacle of ' the mind : whatsoever is done by thy mind, ' that is done by thee.'

This knowlege of ourselves is the more fit to be made matter of exhortation, because it is seldom acquired or indeed pursued, as it deserves to be pursued. For how many are there who look upon themselves as something considerable, when at the same time all the world is sensible that they are nothing ; and with the church of Laodicea in the Revelation (III. 17.) say, that " they are rich, and increased with

Cum igitur Nosce te dicit, dicit Nosce animum tuum. Nam ab animo tuo quicquid agitur, id agitur ate. Cic. Tusc. Dis- corpus quidem quasi vas est aut put. I. 22.

aliquod animi receptaculum ;

“ goods, and have need of nothing ; and know
“ not that they are wretched and miserable
“ and poor and blind and naked ?” Few of us
are like that noble Roman, who wished for a
window to his breast, that all might be con-
spicuous there. So far are we from desiring
that others should know what passeth in our
breasts, that we will hardly give an account of
it to ourselves. Many a man is quicksighted
enough to discern the “ mote” in his “ bro-
“ ther’s” eye, and yet feeleth nothing of the
“ beam” in “ his own” eye. Many a man
valueth himself upon his knowlege of men and
manners, and yet is strangely ignorant of him-
self and of his own genius and manners. Many
a man can talk and harangue profoundly, and
give good advice to others who hath never yet
learned to discourse and advise much with him-
self. And in common life as well as in history
we frequently meet with characters of men,
who had a great deal of skill and address in
managing any affairs but their own.

The truth is, nothing we love more, and
yet nothing we less like to converse with than
ourselves. We prize ourselves above all things,
we commend ourselves, and yet we do not
know ourselves ; and because we do not know
ourselves, therefore are we so fond and con-
ceited of ourselves. We have our eyes always
without us, our thoughts like husbands are
never at home ; and we are so busied in survey-
ing the world abroad, that we have little leisure
and

and less inclination to contemplate the little world within. The fittest opportunity for laying open our hearts and searching them to the bottom is solitude and retirement, and yet of all things we dread being alone, and fly from ourselves, as if we were afraid of ourselves, to drown self-reflection in the noise of impertinent company and more impertinent diversions.

Even when men are alone, they are scarce ever by themselves. How selfish soever they are in other matters, they are too public-spirited to spend their reflections purely upon themselves, and in their most private retirements think more of what they would be than of what they really are, forming schemes for the future, but neglecting the present, considering how to live but not living properly now, very busy in imagination, in reality very idle. It is certain, one may trifle away time as much in his closet as abroad, and as some men are often absent in company, so others are as much absent and out of themselves in solitude. The envious man is never, the angry man is never by himself; for the object of their envy and resentment is always a party in their considerations. The lover is never, the miser is never with himself; for where their treasure is, there will their heart be also. Half of the learning and philosophy in the world is only a more specious and wordy sort of ignorance, and an indirect art of keeping us unacquainted

with (what it becomes us above all things to be acquainted with) ourselves.

So little alone are we, when alone; and if we cannot bear ourselves to exercise the critic upon ourselves, it is not to be expected that we should patiently submit to the criticisms of others. This is the reason why men are so generally averse from receiving advice, for we do not like that others should make more free with us than we do with ourselves. We are well enough pleased with the glass that sheweth us our face, with the physician who informeth us of our habit of body; but who careth to have impartially represented to him the state of his own mind, and willingly admits an adviser in understanding and good sense?

Every one must be sensible from a view of the world and the ways of the world, that there are very few people who really endeavor to know themselves; and even those few who really endeavor it meet with several obstructions and remoras in the way to it. But these obstructions are not insuperable, they may be surmounted, if the proper course be pursued for acquiring this knowlege; and the benefits resulting from it will be more than a sufficient compensation for all the pains taken in the pursuit. There are then three points principally to be considered, the difficulties and impediments in the way to self-knowlege, the best

best means of attaining it, and the great advantages attending it.

I. The difficulties and usual impediments in the way to self-knowlege. The body often cloudeth and overshadoweth the mind, and hindereth us from discerning it, as it is really in itself. Too great an elevation or too great a dejection of spirits betrays our reason, the one into a sort of vanity, the other into a sort of despair; in the former case we are apt to think more confidently more favorably, in the latter perhaps more suspiciously more hardly of ourselves than we deserve. A vigorous body and high pulse are like hot beds in gardening, make our fancies grow wild and luxuriant, and fill us with all the florid ideas as if there was a perfect paradise within: On the other side when musing melancholy prevails and the spleen hath gotten possession of us, they are like untimely frosts, nip our fairest hopes, and make every thing appear gloomy and dark within and without. What is it that generally maketh the young man so sanguin and opiniative, and the old man so desponding and diffident of himself, but the different circulation of the blood, and tide of spirits in the one and ebb in the other? How many are superstitious, how many are enthusiasts merely by the force of their natural constitution? What numbers of poor creatures are plunged into the depths of melancholy and despair, fearing where no fear is, grieving for sins which they never committed,

pronouncing themselves worthy of punishments which they never deserved? And what is usually the spring and source of all this misery, but the violence of some disease or an ill habit of body?

So difficult is it in many cases to gain a clear prospect of the mind through the veil of the body; but the grand obstacles to knowing the heart are the deceitfulness and wickedness of the heart itself. And in this sense we may apply the words of the prophet, that it is matter of difficulty not only to know another's heart, but also to know our own. (Jer. XVII. 9.) "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?" for that reason "who can know it?" A heart without disguise, without passion, without vice is transparent as the clear fountain, and easily seen to the bottom: but the "deceitful" the "wicked" heart is "like the troubled sea (Isa. LVII. 20.) when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." It is impossible to reckon up all the hindrances and impediments to self-knowlege. The diseases of the mind are at least as many as those of the body: Nay so deceitful is the heart, that it deceives us with the very number of its deceptions. It shall be my business to take notice only of such difficulties, as every man may experience in himself, and such I conceive are these or most of these which follow.

1. It is difficult to call off the mind from her attention to the things of sense, and to turn our thoughts inwards upon ourselves so much as is requisite to make us know ourselves. Sensation is easier than reflection; and many men have the one to great perfection, who seem in a manner entire strangers to the other. The soul, like the eye, while it seeth other things, seeth not itself; and it requires a great deal of skill and application to make it its own object. Our ideas follow one another in quick succession, one goeth and another cometh; and not without use and practice we become able to keep our thoughts fixed on any one thing long together. And it is not a sudden glance, a transient thought, that will bring us acquainted with our souls. We must, as I may say, turn them on all sides, and view them in every light; and to do this effectually, and for the time to repel the busy swarm of other ideas, will call for our greatest art and patience and resolution. We are not much used to these abstract speculations, and no wonder we set about them with some reluctance. The necessities of the back and the belly are such powerful sollicitresses that few men aspire higher and think how they may improve the head and the heart,

2. It is sometimes difficult to know what are the great and ruling principles of our lives and actions. Some men have no principles of their own, but think and act and talk by rote, and

camelion-like take the tincture from what they touched last. Others change their principles so often that they might as well have no principles at all ; at different times they act by such different measures, that it is hard to say that this or that prevaieth in them and beareth the greatest sway ; they are “ unstable as water,” and constant in nothing but their inconstancy. Such men may as soon account for the changes and vicissitudes of the wind and the weather, as gain an insight into themselves or a knowledge of their own principles. Even with the more grave and steady a great deal depends upon a good or an ill humor. To day things have succeeded to our wish, our hearts are at ease, we are in perfect charity with all the world, and aim at every thing that is becoming and beautiful in conversation. To morrow we meet with crosses and disappointments, we are angry with all the world, we rail at mankind, and uneasy to ourselves are uneasy to every one about us. Our zeal for religion and our country may perhaps be nothing but a cholerick hasty temper ; or on the other hand a cold phlegmatic constitution may be our only meekness and moderation. How often do we meet with contraries at the same time in the same character ? So that the same person in the same action at the same instant shall be fearful and daring, abject and provoking, tyrannical and slavish, profuse and covetous, extravagant and yet commending œconomy,

economy, perfidious and yet professing sincerity, a coward to men and a brave to God, Nay such artifice is there in mens principles, that many times they are religious out of a principle of irreligion, and because they can get by it and make their godliness their gain: many times they do just and honest things out of mere craft and knavery, and because they can the better impose on the world and carry on their ill designs: many times they are sober and temperate out of nothing but covetousness, and because they would save charges; they can feast high and drink deep at any body's expense but their own. They can lie for the truth, and forswear themselves for God's sake; be humble out of pride, and cruel out of charity; infidels out of credulity, and atheists out of enthusiasm.

3. It is difficult to know whether we shall keep our best purposes and resolutions. For we are perfect courtiers in making fair promises to ourselves, but poor bankrupts in the performance. When the prophet told Hazael what evil he would do unto the children of Israel, how vehemently did he disclaim it, (2 Kings VIII. 13.) "What is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing?" How heartily did St. Peter abhor the thoughts of denying Christ, (Matt. XXVI. 35.) "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee?" And yet we know both the one and the other did the things which they

they so passionately disclaimed and abhorred. We can hardly answer for ourselves for the present, and much less can we insure ourselves for the future. Temptations and dangers seem less at distance than when near at hand; and the event too often proveth our confidence to be vain boasting, our strength to be weakness, our wisdom to be folly. Few peoples resolutions are so well weighed, so well formed, so well kept, as that of the good psalmist, (Psal. CXIX. 106.) "I have sworn, and am stedfastly purposed to keep thy righteous judgments."

4. It is impossible to know ourselves without trial, and it is difficult to know what is a trial sufficient. For men may gloriously withstand one temptation, and yet fall shamefully under another. They may be (3) manly and severe enough to despise pleasure, and yet be soft and effeminate in pain; they may neglect glory, and yet their spirits may be broken with disgrace and infamy. A present seasonably made will gain some men, who would be shocked and offended with a bribe: and some who are not to be moved by menaces and complaints, may easily be won by flattery and insinuation. Different temptations prevail over different minds, as all fishes are not caught by the same bait: and it is the great secret to know what is the true test and touchstone of

(3) Voluptatem severissime- liores; gloriam negligent, fran-
contemnant, in dolore sint mol-
gantur infamia. Cic. Off. I. 4.

ourselves. How many are patient enough of adverse fortune, and yet have their heads turned and are undone by good success? as on the reverse how many are skilful pilots in the smooth sea of prosperity, and yet cannot beat up against the wind and tide of adversity? He who maketh an estimate of himself before he hath had experience of himself, acteth even more imprudently than the man in the gospel, (Luke XIV. 19.) who "first bought" his five yoke of oxen, and "then" went to "prove" them; as much more imprudently as a man's self is of greater value than many oxen. It is to be feared that most people's virtue consists in their having never been sufficiently tried; and our blessed Saviour knowing what is in man, knowing the weakness and infirmity of human nature, hath therefore taught us to pray, "Lead us not into temptation."

5. It is difficult to know ourselves because in taking up a form to deceive others we often effectually deceive ourselves. Every one loveth to set the best side outward; we study appearances more than realities; and few of us dare to ask ourselves "Am I the man I seem and "would be thought, or deceiving others do "I not also deceive myself?" It is certain that we may act a part so long, that in the end we may think it natural to us; and many men by telling a lie often, come to believe it themselves at last. "Deceiving and being "deceived," as St. Paul joineth them, (2 Tim. III.

III. 13.) frequently meet in the same character; and no persons impose on themselves more notoriously than the greatest hypocrits. It is to be suspected that most men are hypocrits in some degree or other: and nothing is more common than to hear people censure and find fault with those very things, of which they themselves are guilty, and yet perhaps do not know themselves to be guilty. They are somewhat like David (2 Sam. XII. 5, 7.) saying "The man that hath done this thing shall surely die;" and have need of some one to say to them as Nathan said to him "Thou art the man," thou thyself doest that which thou condemnest in another.

Lastly, after the most strict examination we can make, Who can number his errors? Who can tell how oft he offendeth? There will still some reserve of sin lie lurking in the soul. And therefore besides the most exact survey we can take of ourselves, we have reason every one of us to pray unto God with holy David, (Psal. XIX. 12.) "Cleanse thou me from my secret faults."

II. There may be these and other difficulties in the way to self-knowlege, but difficulties are not impossibilities. The thing is possible; for otherwise neither would reason nor revelation prescribe it, and hardly would the philosophers, and much less would the inspired writers have enjoined it. The difficulties should rather quicken than slacken our endeavors;

endeavors ; and some help towards surmounting these difficulties is to know them, what they are and wherein they consist. There are difficulties in every other part of knowledge as well as in this ; but do we therefore desist, or rather do we not therefore double our industry and pains ? It may be impossible indeed to know ourselves perfectly, and so it is to know any thing else : but such a knowledge of ourselves, as may serve all the uses of life and conversation, answer all the ends of religion and virtue, we may attain if we will take the proper means to attain it.

For this purpose we should search and study ourselves, examin our own minds, and thoroughly discuss the thoughts of our own hearts. We should study ourselves as much as we do other things, and sift and weigh our own actions as much as we usually do other peoples. We should be as tender of others as we are of ourselves, and as severe upon ourselves as we are upon others. It is as much as concerns thy eternal salvation, therefore retire into thy closet, retire into thyself ; and like the good psalmist (Psal. LXXVII. 6.) “ commune with thy own heart and search
“ out thy spirits.” Lay thy hand upon thy breast, and seriously without reserve or disguise ask and answer thyself. “ Do I love
“ virtue though in a foe, and abhor vice
“ though in a friend ; and do I study to conform my opinions to things, or desire to
“ reduce

“ reduce things to my opinions? Am I a
“ Christian because I am verily persuaded of
“ the truth and excellence of the Christian
“ religion above all the religions in the world,
“ or because I was bred up in it, and it is
“ the religion of the country, and my only
“ way to preferment? I have injured no man,
“ I have defrauded no man; but is it out of
“ fear of the jail or the gallows, or because I
“ scorn to be guilty of a mean and ungene-
“ rous action though ever so secretly ever so
“ much to my advantage? Is my humanity
“ and benevolence confined only to those of
“ my own sect and party, or doth it extend
“ itself to all mankind even to the ungrate-
“ ful and undeserving: and what I give do I
“ give it hoping and looking for something
“ again, or am I disposed to do good only for
“ the sake of doing good, though I was sure
“ it would never be known and never meet
“ with any return? Do I desire to think only
“ what is right, to commend only what is
“ worthy, to act only what is just and good;
“ and would I not rather cease to think and
“ speak and act at all, than basely inglori-
“ ously villainously? Do I prize riches and
“ life for their own sake, or only as they
“ afford the means of doing good: and would
“ I not be content to sacrifice the most prof-
“ perous circumstances of life or even life it-
“ self to the glory of God and the good of
“ mankind?” These and many such questions

as these a man must ask himself, before he can thoroughly know his own heart, its movements are so many and intricate, and the springs which set it a going so secret and involved.

The better to carry on this work of self-examination, we should allot certain portions of our time for it. We should observe the golden rule of Pythagoras, and call ourselves to account every night, while the circumstances are fresh in our memory, for the behaviour of the preceding day, where we have been and what we have done, what duties we have omitted and what sins we have committed; and if we have done any good, let us give God the glory; if we have done any evil, let us humbly implore his forgiveness, and resolve against the like for the future. At least we should examin ourselves thoroughly in times of religious retreat and recollection: such is every Lord's day, such is any fast either public or private, such is the commemoration of our Lord's advent, such is the solemn season of Lent, and the week before receiving the blessed sacrament. Not that these times are in themselves better and more proper for this work than any other, but it is likely that will not be done at any time, for which no particular time is assigned.

We should likewise attend to what is said of us by our enemies as well as by our friends; for though neither of them may paint us exactly,

actly, yet generally malice draweth truer likenesses than flattery. Both friends and enemies may be of real service to us, and both may equally profit us, these by their censures, those by their commendations; provided that if the former commend us, we live up to their commendations, if the latter defame us, we still live so that no body may believe them.

We should also make use of such books as *the Whole Duty of man* for instance, where in the conclusion are drawn up brief heads of self-examination concerning the breaches of our duty to God, to ourselves, and to our neighbour; and try ourselves upon each particular, and impartially ask our own hearts whether we are guilty or not guilty.

But be sure let us never stifle the whispers of conscience, but always listen to its suggestions; and no mirror will more exactly reflect the image of our body than this will of our mind; like a faithful friend, it will always applaud us whenever we do well; like an injured enemy, it will condemn us whenever we do evil.

And the better to inform this conscience, let us diligently compare our lives with the word of God. Be that our test and standard, the rule to regulate all our designs, the touchstone to try all our actions. For as the author to the Hebrews expresseth it, (IV. 12.) and as we may apply it upon this occasion,
“ the

“ the word of God is quick and powerful,
“ and sharper than any two edged sword,
“ piercing even to the dividing asunder of
“ soul and spirit and of the joints and mar-
“ row, and is a discerner of the thoughts and
“ intents of the heart.”

Lastly, whether we know our own hearts or not, they are perfectly known to God, and it is in vain to use any artifice or disguise before him. This is sufficiently intimated in the words of the prophet, (Jer. XVII. 9, 10.) “ The heart is deceitful above all things and “ desperately wicked, who can know it? I “ the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, “ even to give to every man according to his “ ways and according to the fruit of his do- “ ings.” It is a happy thing indeed if our heart do not condemn us, but though we “ know nothing by ourselves,” as the apostle saith, (1 Cor. IV. 4.) “ yet are we not “ hereby justified.” How well soever therefore we may think of ourselves, yet we should humble our hearts before God; and beg of him that the knowlege which is so difficult to us he would make easy, what is good in us he would strengthen and confirm, what is amiss in us he would correct and reform, and so bring us to everlasting life, (Jer. XVII. 14.) “ Heal us, O Lord, and we shall “ be healed; save us, and we shall be saved, “ for thou art our praise.”

III. By these means we may arrive at a competent degree of self-knowledge, and for our farther encouragement we shall experience many and great advantages attending it. To study ourselves is the most effectual proof that we can give of our love to ourselves; and we cannot surely think such an employment beneath us, or pretend want of leisure and opportunity for it, when the great emperor and philosopher Marcus Antoninus, amidst so many affairs and avocations, composed twelve books of *his conversation with himself* for the regulating of his conduct and behaviour in every part of life; and most useful books they are, written with all the acuteness of a philosopher, and with all the majesty of an emperor; and though the works of an Heathen, yet worthy of the perusal of every Christian. In them it is excellently said, (4) 'People seek retirements for themselves, country-houses and sea-shores and mountains: but this is all vulgar, when you may retire into yourself at what hour soever you please, for a man retires no where more quietly than into his own soul.' 'Look within (5), says he, within is a fountain of good, and always springing up, if you will always dig.' And

(4) Αναχωρησεις αυτοις ζητεσιν, εγροικιας, και οικιας, και ορη-
δον δι του ιδιωτικωτατον εστιν, εξου-
ης αι ωρας ιδιωτικης εις αυτον ανα-
χωρουν· υδαμιν γαρ εις ησυχιασιν

εις απραγμοτερον ανθρωπον ανα-
χωρει η εις την αυτου ψυχην. Lib.
4. Cap. 3.

(5) Ειδον βλεπει ενδον η πηγη
τη αγαθη, και αι αναβλυειν δυνα-
μις,

And (6) again, 'It is seldom seen, that any man is the worse for not knowing the state of another's mind, but they must needs be wretched who attend not to the motions of their own.'

Certainly the study of ourselves is a more generous, a more useful, a more becoming employment than prying into the faults, and ripping up the characters of others. We shall see never the worse for the "mote" that is in our "brother's eye," but how can we see clearly with a "beam" in "our own eye?"

They too, who are so forward to pass their judgment upon others, may please to consider, that the man who hath studied most the various turns and inflections, the counterpoises and balances of his own mind, can give the shreudest guess at the mind of others, and at what they would do in such and such circumstances. It is confessedly a great part of wisdom to know the world and mankind; but wisdom, like charity, begins at home; and the readiest way to know other people is first to know ourselves. (7) Ab uno disce omnes, from one we may in a great measure learn all. Human nature is generally alike in her workings. We may be composed of different metals,

μη, εαν αι σκαλης. Lib. 7. δι τοις της ιδιαις ψυχης κινήμασι μη
Cap. 59. παρακολεθειαι, αναγκαυ καταδαιμον

(6) Παρα μιν το μη εμφανει μη. Lib. 2. Cap. 8.
τι εν τη αλλη ψυχη γινεται ου (7) Virgil.
ραδιως τις ωφθη καταδαιμονων τας

tals, (some of gold, some of silver, some of brass and some of lead) but however we are all of us cast pretty much in the same mold. The physician, who knoweth most of his own case and constitution, will discover the greatest sagacity in judging of another's; and in like manner he will understand mankind best, who best understands himself.

As knowing ourselves may improve us in the knowlege of the world and of mankind, so it may prove also the means of conducting us to what is better, to some knowlege of God. From the consideration of the frame and organs of the body, of the powers and faculties of the soul, we must see and feel that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, that we did not make ourselves, that we are therefore the handiwork of some superior being transcendent in power wisdom and goodness; and so from the contemplation of the human nature we may rise by just degrees to some ideas of the divine perfections. Man being made in the image of God, by a careful survey of the copy we may the better judge of the excellences of the great original.

The study of ourselves is a study that more nearly concerns us than any other, and in which we can arrive at certainty if in any other. For what concerns a man so much as his self, and what can he know if he cannot know his own thoughts and affections? Without doubt it is a great satisfaction to know our company
and

and friends, that we may the better accommodate ourselves to their opinions and humors; but surely it is much more necessary to know our constant and inseparable companion for life, our own mind and temper.

The dissection of the heart, the anatomy of the passions; this is the philosophy superior to all other philosophy, and is the foundation and ground-work of morality and religion itself. The sun shineth as pleasantly upon the rude peasant as upon the most learned philosopher, who can describe its motions, and account for its influence. The blood circulateth and the pulse beateth as regularly in those who think not of it at all, as in those who think of it ever so profoundly. But what health or soundness, what order or œconomy is there in a mind, that is not studiously observed, and is kept under no certain regimen and controll? Whenever the body is affected with pain or sickness, we seek instantly to know the cause, and apply the cure: and is it not much superior and nobler to learn the distempers and remedies of our souls?

The knowlege of ourselves is a knowlege, in which we can have no sharers, no rivals; and if a man will not gain it for himself, no body can acquire it for him. For (2 Cor. II. 11.) "what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?"

It is a knowlege, that not like other knowlege "puffeth up," but is the mother of humility; and the more we know of ourselves, the more we discover our vanity and emptiness. If you see a man proud and conceited of himself, depend upon it he knoweth not himself. (1 Cor. VIII. 2.) "If any man thinketh that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know." Vain man! be humble at least till thou knowest thyself, and when thou knowest thyself, thou wilt of course be humble.

It may teach us not only a lesson of humility, but likewise a lesson of charity. For since it is not without some difficulty that we know ourselves, we may learn not to be too hasty, too peremptory in judging of others. But yet if we will observe it, the most ignorant are always the most free and forward in giving characters: as in matters of learning those are ever the most ready to criticise another's works, who were never able to produce any thing good of their own. "Physician heal thyself" (Luke IV. 23.) was a good proverb; and it may be said with the same reason, presume not to censure another before thou knowest thyself. (Matt. VII. 5.) "Thou hypocrit, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." He who is duly sensible of his own failings and imperfections, will be less strict and severe upon
upon

It may teach us not only charity to others, but also to set a just value upon ourselves. For as (8) Cicero well observes, the precept of knowing ourselves was not given merely to humble human arrogance, but also that we might know our own perfections. This may oftentimes prove a most excellent guard and preservative of virtue; may hinder us from wasting our time, mispending our money, or doing any thing mean or unworthy of our character and station: enable us to know our good qualities as well as our bad ones, and to cultivate the former as well as correct the latter; instruct us to keep up the respect that is due to ourselves, and upon all occasions to exert a proper courage and resolution, becoming good men and good christians.

What other way can we be assured, whether we deserve the censures of our enemies, or the praises of our friends, and that the former do not abuse and slander, or that the latter do not flatter and betray us? What other way can a

(8) Illud γνῶθι σεαυτοῖς noli
putare ad arrogantiam minuend-
am solum esse dictum, verum

etiam ut bona nostra norimus.
Cic.

man establish the empire and command of the mind, and insure himself one and the same to day as yesterday, and to morrow as to day? man's mind is his heaven or his hell; and who would not regulate that upon which his happiness or his misery principally depends?

David was a man who thoroughly studied his own heart, and this was the way he became the man after God's heart: And he not only did thus himself, but also recommends the practice of soliloquy and self-converse to others; (Psal. IV. 4.) "Stand in awe," saith he, "and sin not, commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still:" And the psalms are a spiritual looking-glass or mirror to show a man's self to himself, and represent the devout soul in all postures and conditions of life; and (James I. 22, 23, 24.) "the man who beholdeth his face in" this "glass, and" then "goeth his way, and" "straightway forgetteth what manner of man" "he was, is only a hearer of the word, and" "not a doer, deceiving his own self."

The man who never adjusts and balances his accounts, is not likely to thrive in the world, and will probably let his affairs go to ruin. It is the same in our spiritual concerns as in our temporal: He who never taketh account of himself, can never know what ground he gaineth in virtue, or what he loseth in vice, what in his conduct is to be continued and approved or what to be corrected and reformed.

What

What supine negligent creatures are those, who have need of a fit of sickness or some losses in the world, to remind them of themselves, and to make them think of their own immortal souls? What is a total neglect of this kind but distraction and madness; and what are madmen but men *besides themselves*? At least it is a strong symptom of a guilty conscience, when a man can never abide to be by himself, and examin his own heart. He must surely be strangely galled, who cannot bear even his own handling. And what signifies deferring this work of self-inspection? It must be done, and will be done one time or other; and the longer it is deferred, the more fatal it will be. The wounds of conscience like other wounds, fester and grow worse by being neglected; and what might be cured by probing at first, may end in the cutting off a limb or the loss of life.

God is emphatically stiled in scripture "the God who trieth the heart and the reins:" and what account can they give of themselves to him in the day of judgment, who have never once been at the pains of examining themselves in this life? They could not endure so much as to try themselves privately in their closets, and how then will they stand a public trial at the bar of divine justice in the sight of men and angels? (Luke VIII. 17.) "No-
" thing is secret that shall not" then "be
" made manifest, neither any thing hid that
" shall

“ shall not” then “ be known.” And what a melancholy thing will it be, when they first come to know themselves, to know themselves to be for ever miserable!

Let us therefore judge ourselves, brethren, that we be not judged and condemned of the Lord. (1 John III. 20, 21.) “ If our heart
“ condemn us not, then have we confidence
“ towards God: but if our heart condemn
“ us, God is greater than our heart, and
“ knoweth all things.” And therefore it is not enough for us to know ourselves, but we should also pray unto God, who knoweth us better, after the manner of the good psalmist (CXXXIX. 23, 24.) “ Search us and know
“ our hearts, try us and know our thoughts:
“ And see if there be any wicked way in us,
“ and lead us in the way everlasting.”

DISSERTATION XLV.

ON ANGER.

AS the passions are the source and occasion of most evils and calamities in life, the providence of God hath been sometimes impeached for making man of such a frame and constitution.

constitution. But they who find fault with the frame and constitution of man, do not surely enough consider his place and rank in the scale of beings. They do not remember that he is [*nexus utriusque mundi*] the bond and cement of both worlds, a sort of middle creature between the different orders of angels above him, and the various species of brutes below him: and though he be not framed as perfect as he might be, yet is he not framed as perfect as the rank and condition of such a middle creature will allow? Are not his powers and faculties exactly adjusted and adapted to his place and station? and was he more or less perfect, would there not be a chasm or defect in the creation, would there not be as it were a link broken in the chain of nature, and by that means the regular series and gradation of beings be disturbed?

Where reason and understanding are in perfection, there passion is excluded, mind directs and governs all in all: And therefore in God, a being of the most complete and absolute perfections, there is all understanding and no passion, though sometimes in scripture language, and in condescension to our capacities, passions are attributed to him who is all mind, as sometimes also limbs and members are ascribed to him who is all spirit: and the nearer any creatures approach to the perfections of God, the freer they are from passion; and the more subject they are to it, the farther they

they are removed from him. On the other hand where there is little or no reason and understanding, there passion and appetite prevail, instinct directs and governs all in all: as we may see plainly in the brutal part of the creation, that is continually moved and incited by these springs of action: and the more any creatures are like the brutes, the more they are under the dominion of their appetites and passions; and the less they are under this dominion, the less they resemble the brute creation. Now man being as I say a sort of middle creature, partly formed, like the brutes, out of the dust of the earth, and partly made, like the angels, in the image of God, he is neither all reason and understanding, nor all appetite and passion; but hath appetites and passions to prompt and incite him to action where only reason and understanding would be too abstract and lazy, and hath reason and understanding to direct and moderate his actions where only appetites and passions would precipitate him into extravagance and excess.

Or may not the same thing be considered and represented in another light? May it not reasonably be presumed and asserted, that the passions are properties and affections of corporeal and spiritual substances united? they are found neither in body alone nor in spirit alone, but arise from the union of both together. And therefore God, who is a perfectly pure spirit, is perfectly free from all passion. The
highest

highest angels are probably cloathed with some fine ethereal bodies, they are certainly not such pure spirits as God; and therefore neither are they so free from passion. But as the angels are chiefly spiritual beings, they are chiefly intellectual beings under the guidance and direction of reason and understanding; and as the brutes are chiefly corporeal beings, they are chiefly sensual beings under the guidance and direction of appetite and passion. And the proportion holdeth through all the different species and kinds of creatures; in the same degree as they are more spiritual, they are more intellectual, the more refined are their reason and understanding; and in the same degree they are more corporeal, they are more sensual, the grosser are their appetites and passions. Now man, being a compound of soul and body, partakes of the perfections and imperfections of the one and the other. As he is in one part body, he is indued with appetites and passions; and he is likewise indued with reason and understanding, as he is in the other part spirit. His reason and understanding would be too remiss in this prison of the body without appetites and passions to rouse and employ them; and his appetites and passions would be too powerful without reason and understanding to check and restrain them. And when he preserves the superiority of his mind over his body, then he plainly evinces his alliance and kindred with the angels; when he suffers his
body

body to gain the ascendent over his mind, then he degrades himself to the level with the "beasts that perish."

You see then what is the use and intent of the passions in general, and for what reasons they were implanted in man; and if we were to examin each passion in particular, we should find them not only very innocent in themselves, but very useful and necessary to the various ends and purposes of life. Love and hatred, desire and aversion, hope and fear, joy and sorrow, if placed upon proper objects, and exercised upon proper occasions, if conducted by righteous means and directed to righteous ends, are all of the greatest use and advantage; and it is only the abuse of them, that renders them pernicious and sinful. *Anger* carries a harsher sound with it than most of them; but the apostle doth not, Stoic like, advise the total abolition and extirpation of it. He understood human nature too well absolutely to forbid this passion, and like a wise philosopher is only for restraining it. "Be ye angry," says he, (Eph. IV. 26.) "and sin not:" If you are angry upon any occasion, take care that your anger is such, that you fall not into sin. And in discoursing farther upon this subject, we will 1st consider how we may be angry and sin not, or in what cases anger is reasonable and lawful; and 2dly consider how we may be angry and sin, or in what cases anger is unreasonable and unlawful; and 3dly and

and lastly offer some arguments for the moderating and restraining of this passion, with some instructions how to moderate and restrain it.

I. Let us consider how we may be angry and sin not, or in what cases anger is reasonable and lawful.

Our Saviour forbids us to be angry with our brother "without cause;" (Matt. V. 22.) which implies that there may be a sufficient *cause* of anger. And indeed the man, who is not capable of being provoked, is capable of nothing. Such insensibility you may call meekness and good-nature if you please, but it rather deserves the name of stupidity. The men of the brightest parts and of the quickest apprehensions are most apt to kindle into the first motions of anger: And this passion is wisely implanted in our breasts to rouse and animate us, or otherwise we should grow too remiss and lazy, and should not have spirit and courage enough to resist and repel any injuries or evils to which human life is obnoxious. Anger is a sort of natural armour, as necessary to our preservation, as teeth or horns or claws are to some other creatures. Upon the first offer of any insult and injury it instantly rouseth us to our defense with such a sudden instinct as the eyelid closeth upon the approach of any danger to the eye. It summons and exerts our spirits, more than we can do upon cool deliberation; and therefore a man in a
I passion

passion is stronger than at another time, and more able to resist and defeat any violence or opposition. If we were not sometimes thus animated, if we were to be meek and passive upon every occasion, we should invite injurious treatment by the very means which we took to avoid it. It is only the fear of our anger and resentment that can keep an ill-natured world from constantly annoying and offending us. That is our flaming sword as I may say, which turneth every way to guard our tree of life.

Injury and evil are proper objects of our anger and resentment, as well when done to others as to ourselves. If we were all made up of meekness and compassion, if we had not a mixture of severity to balance the tenderness of our nature, injuries would never be prosecuted nor right asserted, the sword of justice might grow rusty in the scabbard, and would never be drawn even against the most hainous offenders. Some measure of anger and resentment is therefore a great support of society; and a man who can hear the orphan's cries and behold the widow's tears without pity for the sufferers, and without indignation against the oppressors, must have a very soft head or a very hard heart. They who are most irascible, most apt to kindle into sudden anger (1), are often persons of the greatest good-nature. If they are soon provoked, they are soon appeased. When

(1) *Irasci facilis, tamen ut placabilis essem.*

Hor.

the spirit is long in raising, it is commonly long in laying too.

If injuries done to men may reasonably provoke our indignation, how can we be cool and unconcerned when the worst of offenses are committed against God? Is it expedient that we should resent for ourselves and for our fellow creatures; and shall we have no regard, no passion for the honor of our and their common Creator? We have certainly no love for God, if with patience we can see and hear his ordinances profaned, his word vilified, and his name blasphemed. Moses is said to have been "the meekest man upon earth;" and yet how was his spirit provoked at the idolatry of the Israelites? The blessed Jesus, who was meekness itself, is yet said by the evangelist (Mark III. 5.) to look upon the Pharisees "with anger being grieved for the hardness of their hearts:" and when the temple was profaned, with what rage and vehemence did he drive out the buyers and sellers? so that (John II. 17.) "the disciples remembered" and applied the saying of the psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." Nay God himself is sometimes in scripture said to be angry; and we may be certain, that this passion though in a figure would not have been attributed to him, if it had been any thing sinful in itself.

The proper objects then of anger and resentment are violence and injury done to ourselves,

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injustice

injustice and oppression exercised to others, and profaneness and contempt of God's holy name and his word; and in these cases we may say with Jonah (IV. 9.) but with much more reason, that "we do well to be angry."

II. Having thus considered how we may be angry and sin not, or in what cases anger is reasonable and lawful; let us consider secondly how we may be angry and sin, or in what cases anger is unreasonable and unlawful. And in short it may be said, that it is unreasonable and unlawful, when employed upon improper objects and occasions, and when exerted in undue measure and manner.

It is unreasonable and unlawful, when employed upon improper objects and occasions—when it proceeds from little or no cause in others, when a man is blown up into a passion upon any trifling occasion, and his temper is ruffled by every cross accident, like the sea by every adverse gale. A passion without sufficient cause cannot be without sin.—So likewise when it ariseth from any vicious cause in ourselves, as want of consideration, a spirit of intolerance and persecution, covetousness, pride, envy, too good an opinion of ourselves or too mean an one of others. A passion that is founded in sin must needs be sinful.—So likewise when it is vented upon things inanimate or creatures irrational, as when Balaam was in such a fury with his ass, and Xerxes gave orders for whipping the sea. For not
8 every

every evil is to raise our anger, but evil that carrieth in it the notion of injury; and such creatures cannot with any propriety be said to injure us.—So likewise when it is discharged upon those, who can as little be said to injure us as brute creatures, children and ideots; or those, who though possibly they may have injured us, yet never designed it and perhaps could not help it. In such a case resentment in us would be more blameable than the trespass in them.—So likewise when it is expressed without distinction of persons; superiors or inferiors, friends or enemies, relations or strangers: And more especially when it is expressed against God, when we charge him foolishly and fret and murmur at his dispensations. The creature to be angry with the creator is such a monstrous incongruity as we could hardly believe if we did not frequently see!

As anger is unreasonable and unlawful when employed upon improper objects and occasions, so likewise is it when exerted in undue measure and manner, and it is exerted in undue measure and manner—when it exceeds proportion and is greater than the value of the thing deserves; when we are as outrageous for a trifle as for a matter of importance, and grow habitually passionate or peevish, rage outwardly or fret inwardly according as our temper and spirits are stronger or weaker.—So likewise when it exceeds the bounds of

decency and discretion; when our fury betrays us to say and do foolish things, to call names and use horrid oaths and imprecations, to curse men and blaspheme God.—So likewise when it is discharged at improper times and places, when we give a loose to passion before our superiors, are quarrelsome and abusive in company, rage and bluster in public assemblies, and carry our resentments even to the horns of the altar.—So likewise when it continues long upon us, and thereby degenerates into malice and revenge. “Let not the sun go down upon your wrath” is the apostle’s advice immediately following, “Be ye angry, and sin not; let not the sun go down upon your wrath:” and a (2) Heathen could teach his scholars this lesson, that whatever differences they had in the day, they should yet shake hands and be reconciled before night. A wise man may kindle into anger, but as Solomon saith (Eccles. VII. 9.) “it resteth in the bosom of fools.”—So likewise when it remains, after the party offending hath been prosecuted by due form of law, for if Christians may carry their resentments as far as the law, yet surely they ought not to carry them beyond it; or after a man hath made submission and satisfaction for the injuries which he may have done us: And more especially when it remains at our devotions, where we ought to “lift up holy hands without wrath;” for

(2) Pythagoras.

how

how can we hope for mercy, if we will show no mercy? how can we expect that "God will forgive us our trespasses," if "we will not also forgive men their trespasses?"

III. As anger in so many instances is unreasonable and unlawful, we shall thirdly and lastly offer some arguments for the moderating and restraining of this passion with some instructions how to moderate and restrain it.

Think then of the extreme folly of this passion in excess. It is the mark of a weak and little mind to have no more command over one's self; and accordingly in sickness and pain, in childhood and old age, which is a second childhood, we are most subject to it. It is not only the effect of folly, but the cause of folly too. Counsel and advice to a man in a passion are as unseasonable (Prov. XXVI. 1.) "as snow in summer." He will not attend even to his own reason, and no wonder then he will not listen to that of others. He is more like a madman than a rational creature, and plungeth into absurdities with as little sense or reflection "as the horse rusheth into the battle." I suppose that the intent of anger, if any thing at all is intended, is to strike an awe into people; but instead of reverence it raiseth contempt, which is another instance of its folly. In any debate, in any controversy it is parting with the staff out of your own hands. It is the very thing that your enemy would desire, and you cannot give him a greater advantage over you. Truth and

passion have nothing to do together; and if a man is in a rage, it is a very shrewd sign that he is in the wrong. Reason like its divine author is not in the "whirlwind" or the "earthquake" or the "fire." (1 Kings XIX.) The "still small voice," is the voice of reason and of God.

Think again of the deformity and disagreeableness of this passion in excess. The Spartans used to show a drunken man to their children in order to deter them from drunkenness; and the sight of a man in a passion is almost enough to cure us of being passionate. He is as horrid a spectacle, as if he was in a fit of convulsion, his eyes rolling, his mouth foaming, his limbs trembling, and his features all distorted. And can any thing be more disagreeable in public or domestic life, in any office, in any station, than a man of such a combustible spirit that with the least spark will kindle into a flame? All who can will avoid him as unfit for civil society; and those, who cannot avoid him but are obliged to be in the way of his peevishness and passion, are indeed extremely to be pitied. No body will bear to live with him; but they, whose circumstances are such, that they cannot live well without him.

Think besides of the inconvenience and danger of this passion in excess. It is as painful to a man's self, as it is disagreeable to others; impairs the health and spirits, is
 agony

agony to the mind as well as convulsion to the body; and though it may make a man stronger for the time, yet it leaveth him weaker afterwards. If you will not get the dominion over your passion, your passion will get the dominion over you. And of all the passions anger is perhaps the most violent, the most headstrong and imperious, and therefore is above all others distinguished by the name of *passion*. Nothing hath occasioned greater evils and calamities in life. What cities hath it laid in ashes? What countries hath it depopulated? The anger of a man could furnish matter for an (3) Epic poem. Other passions may have slain their thousands, but this hath destroyed its ten thousands. In more private characters how often doth it expose men to quarrels and engage them in duels? An angry man is always in some broil or other. As Solomon affirms, (Prov. XIX. 19.) "A man of great wrath shall suffer punishment, for if thou deliver him yet thou must do it again."

Think moreover of the great sin of this passion in excess. Acting against reason is acting against God; and what is man that he should be angry, who is but dust and ashes, and infinitely a greater sinner against heaven than any man can be against him? and whom is he usually angry with but his fellow-creature and fellow-Christian, one who hath the

(3) The Iliad.

D d 4

same

same father and the same redeemer, one who is a brother, nay more than a brother, a member of the same body in Christ Jesus? Can any thing be more contrary to all that our Saviour taught and all that he did? (1 Pet. II. 23.) "who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." Freedom from passion is not only for our present ease, but also for our future happiness. With the mind of furies how can we ever be fit for the society of angels? In vain shall we expect to get to heaven, unless we are possessed of the temper of heaven.

Resist therefore the beginnings of this passion, resist it in your youth; for few persons grow milder and better natured as age advances. The course of the passions is like the course of rivers, which are weak at the spring head, and you may turn them almost whither you please; but the farther they run, the greater and stronger they grow.—Live not too high and luxurious, for high living inflames the blood, and disposes men to be choleric and hasty. All creatures the more flesh they devour, the fiercer they are. You must take off some of the fuel, if you would lessen the fire.—Consider where you are most exposed to passion, and there guard most against it. Think what objects and occasions have most been used to raise it for the time past, and

avoid them for the time to come.—Avoid the company of the angry, if you would not be so yourself. It is hardly possible to mix much in conversation with the quarrelsome without engaging in quarrels.—Set not your affections too much upon any thing, and you will not be too much provoked at any disappointment. Few accidents in life will be able to ruffle and discompose you, if you are reasonably indifferent.—“Think not more highly of yourself than you ought to think (Rom. XII. 3.) but think soberly;” for the least offense that is but as it were a molehill pride magnifies into a mountain. As pride and passion, so humility and meekness are twins, and go hand in hand together.—Put the most favorable construction upon the words and actions of others. Look upon men as you choose to do upon pictures in the best and most commodious light, and be more disposed to be pleased than to be offended. People are often out of humour for something said or done, only because they misapprehend it.—Be not offended with any man upon surmises and reports only, stay at least till you are satisfied of the truth; (Ecclus XIX. 15.) “it may be he hath not done it, it may be he hath not said it; for many times it is a slander, and believe not every tale.”—When you find yourself growing into a passion, take time to consider, walk a little aside, count twenty or a hundred, and you will be cool

again.—You can command your passion before your superiors, and why then can ye not in the more immediate presence of God? The thought of his Omnipresence is of itself enough to prevent all immoderate anger, and awe us into silence.—Farther pray unto God, that he would give you the spirit of charity and meekness, of forbearance and forgiveness. His grace will meliorate nature.—The better to encourage you, “look up unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” (Heb. XII. 3.) “Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest you be wearied and faint in your mind.”—Finally remember, that among “the works of the flesh” (Gal. V. 20, &c.) are reckoned “hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife; but the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness: and they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.”—I will conclude all with the advice of the psalmist, (XXXVII. 8, &c.) “Cease from anger, and forsake wrath, fret not thyself in any wise to do evil: For evil doers shall be cut off, but the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.”

END of Vol. V.



